

Physical/Mobility Disabilities:

Let staff know if you use a wheelchair, scooter, walker, or cane. Ask if the facility is accessible (ask about the parking lot, building entrance, elevator, waiting area, exam room, and restrooms). Tell the staff if you can sit upright without assistance, stand, lift and move your arms, or undress and dress without assistance, and transfer from your wheelchair or scooter to another chair. You can ask to remain in your wheelchair or scooter during the mammogram and whether you can be accommodated if your wheelchair does not have removable arms. Tell staff if you experience spasticity or other physical issues that may interfere with the mammogram procedure.



Resources:

1. American Association on Health & Disability www.aadh.us
2. Breast Health Access for Women with Disabilities (BHAWD) www.bhawd.org
3. Center for Research on Women with Disabilities www.bcm.tmc.edu/crowd
4. The National Women's Health Information Center www.4women.gov
5. National Cancer Institute www.cancer.gov
6. Susan G. Komen for the Cure www.komen.org
7. North Carolina Office on Disability and Health www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncodh

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WOWDHEC

Women with Disabilities Health Equity Coalition

This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

Oregon Office on Disability and Health

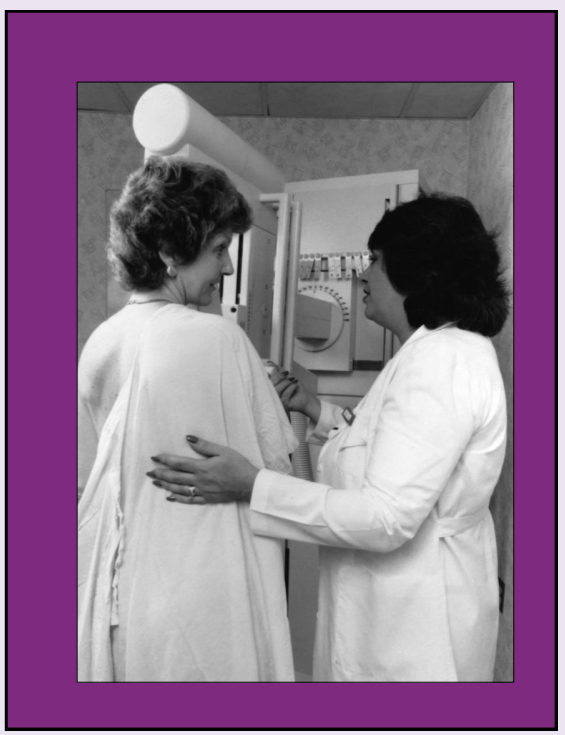
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Tips for Women with Disabilities



Getting Your Mammogram



What is a mammogram?

A low-dose X-ray picture of the breast used to detect breast cancer. Mammograms can show breast changes like cysts, lumps or tumors. Research has found that most changes found are not cancer.

Tips for women with Disabilities: Getting Your Mammogram

Q: How often should a woman get a mammogram?

The National Cancer Institute recommends that women age 40 and older have mammograms every 1 to 2 years. Women with disabilities may be at higher risk due to:

- Obesity
- Lack of or delayed childbearing
- Radiation exposure
- Delayed diagnosis
- Lack of preventive screening



Q: How can I, a woman with a disability, maintain my breast health effectively?

- **Have regular breast exams-** perform self exams once a month, get a clinical breast exam from your doctor, and get a mammogram if you are 40 years of age or older, or if your doctor recommends it.
- **Call your doctor's office** if you notice a lump or thickening of the breast, a dimple, discharge from the nipple, or skin changes on the breast.
- **Schedule the mammogram** when your breasts will be least tender, usually the week after your period.
- **Prepare for the mammogram** by wearing a blouse that opens in the front or a top that is easily removed. Don't wear underarm deodorant or powder or lotion on or near the breasts.
- **Be prepared to provide** information on changes in your medical history, the date of your last period, your current medications, and any chronic pain or breast problems.

- **Be a self-advocate!** When scheduling the appointment, **inform staff of your particular disability and request any reasonable accommodations needed**, such as extra time, a sign language interpreter, or assistance with dressing. If you had a prior mammogram, tell the technologist what accommodations had worked for you in the past.
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Depending upon your disability, consider requesting the following accommodations when scheduling the appointment :

- **Blind or Visual:** Inform staff if you will need alternate formats of printed material such as large print, computer disc/CD-ROM, Braille, or cassette tape.
- **Communication Disabilities:** Inform staff it might take extra time for you to communicate effectively with them. Let staff know your preferred method of communication.

- **Deaf or Hard of Hearing:** Use the Relay Telecommunications system when scheduling or calling the office. Let staff know if you need a sign language interpreter. Invite a friend or family member to go with you. Let the medical staff know about your hearing loss and how they can help you communicate and understand.
- **Emotional Disability:** Before the exam, prepare emotionally by thinking about the importance of a mammogram and practicing relaxation and deep breathing techniques. Use these techniques during the exam to lessen anxiety. Invite a friend or family member to go with you if she will help make you feel more at ease.
- **Intellectual Disabilities:** Ask questions if you don't understand something. If you have a caregiver, have her accompany you to the appointment and stay for the exam if you need her to. You may take notes or have your caretaker take them.