



WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS

After your mammogram, the doctor (radiologist) will check the results for changes in your breasts by looking at the mammogram X-ray. The changes may or may not be signs of cancer.

Changes in the breasts sometimes found by mammograms can include

- Calcifications, which look like small white spots on the mammogram and may or may not be caused by cancer
- A mass, which can be
 - ✓ a cyst (a fluid-filled non-cancerous sac) or
 - ✓ a solid tumor that may or not be cancer

Your health care provider may want to perform further tests to get a better understanding of your breasts. He/she may want to do one or both of the following

- **Ultrasound:** an ultrasound can tell the difference between types of lumps. Ultrasounds do not hurt and help health care providers find out about size, shape, and thickness of lumps.
- **MRI:** another way for doctors to take a picture of the breast by using a large magnet and radio waves.

You may need a biopsy after your screening test

- After your mammogram, ultrasound, or MRI, your doctor may recommend you get a biopsy afterward to prove for sure that an abnormal area is cancer.
- A biopsy is when a small amount of tissue is removed from the breast.

Tips for getting a better biopsy – Inquire about accessibility

- Before getting your biopsy, find out about accessibility to and within the facility.
- Tell staff beforehand about your needs.
- Since biopsy tables are generally high and sometimes hard for women with disabilities to get up on, ask before the biopsy if the staff has experience helping women with disabilities.
- Ask to bring someone to the biopsy to help you.



source: National Cancer Institute
Author: Bill Branson (Photographer)

What happens after the biopsy is done?

- After the biopsy, the doctor can tell if cancer is present and if it has spread by looking at the tissue under a microscope.
- Depending on the results of the physical exam and biopsy, additional tests may also be needed.

If the doctor finds cancer, try not to be afraid. It might help you to know

- The chance of a woman getting breast cancer is one in eight women over a lifetime. Breast cancer happens more than you think, and you are not alone!

continued.....

continued...

If the doctor finds cancer, try not to be afraid. It might help you to know

- There are about 3.1 million breast cancer survivors alive today in the U.S.
- Most recent statistics available from Susan G. Komen state the five-year overall survival rate for early stage breast cancer is 99%.
- Women are leading full lives with breast cancer. This is due to:
 - ✓ Earlier detection (finding cancer early) through screening tests or exams
 - ✓ Improved treatment

Tips for getting better care from diagnosis through treatment

- When discussing your diagnosis with your doctor, ask questions if you do not understand.
- You should bring a spouse, family member, friend, or caregiver with you to take notes and ask questions.
- It is especially important for women with disabilities to use the services that patient navigator programs provide. These programs give information and support to those with breast cancer.
- From the point of diagnosis through treatment, patient navigators can help make sure that women with disabilities get the services they need. Navigators help identify barriers to care and resources to overcome those barriers.
- Always discuss any accessibility challenges with your doctor when discussing your diagnosis and treatment plan.

REMEMBER--after being diagnosed with breast cancer, get as much information as possible about your condition and the suggested treatment options.



American Association on Health and Disability
www.aahd.us



877-465-6636 (hotline)
ww5.komen.org

For more information, please contact AAHD Komen Project Director at 301-545-6140 x203 or visit our website at www.aahd.us

This publication was made possible by a 2016-2018 grant from Susan G. Komen®.

© 2016 American Association on Health & Disability

American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD) provides the materials and links for general information, education and awareness purposes only. Although every effort is made to assure that information is accurate and current, knowledge in the field of disability and medicine is changing often, and all data is subject to change without notice. AAHD makes no representations or warranties and assumes no responsibility or liability as to the accuracy, completeness, reliability or usefulness of any information contained in this document. Neither AAHD nor any parties, who supply information to AAHD, make any warranty concerning the accuracy of any information in this document.

