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Mammography

The purpose of this leaflet is to provide the patient with information about mammography and how to prepare for it.

General information

Mammography is performed in the Magdaleena unit of East Tallinn Central Hospital at Pärnu mnt 104.

Mammography is performed if you have a doctor's referral or you belong to a screening target group. To schedule an appointment for mammography, call **606 7684**. If you cannot come to the appointment at the agreed time, please notify us immediately by calling the same number.

What is mammography?

Mammography is the most common type of breast examination aimed at diagnosing and detecting breast diseases. Mammography is primarily indicated for women over the age of 35. Mammography is performed using a special X-ray machine. X-rays are used to produce a mammography image, i.e. a mammogram. The radiation dose you are exposed to during the examination procedure is very small and safe for health.

Diagnostic mammography is used to examine a patient who experiences breast discomfort or other abnormalities, such as a discharge from the nipple, a change in the shape of the breast, a nodule, a lump or a mass in the breast, skin changes or enlarged axillary lymph nodes. Mammography is also performed in the absence of complaints for timely detection of breast diseases, which at an early stage do not cause any ailments characteristic of the disease.

Preparing for the examination procedure

All breast concerns should be discussed with your doctor before having a mammogram. Be sure to inform your doctor about your previous surgeries, hormone replacement therapy and the presence of breast cancer in close relatives.

If you have breast implants, inform your doctor and the radiology technician.

Be sure to inform your doctor or the radiology technician if there is even the slightest chance that you are expecting a baby.

The best time to have a mammogram is the week following your period. Avoid having a mammogram the week before your period, as your breasts are often tender and sensitive at this time.

The examination procedure is performed with your upper body undressed. For your convenience, we recommend wearing a two-piece clothing that day, such as a skirt or trousers and a blouse, rather than a dress.

Please note:

- Do not use any deodorant, powder, body lotion or cream under your arms or on your breasts on the day of your mammogram appointment as they may interfere with the assessment of the mammogram.
- All jewellery in the chest area should be removed before having the mammogram.
- Before the examination procedure, your mammogram appointment the radiology technician about any problems or symptoms related to your breasts.
- You will find out the result of the examination from your doctor.

If the mammogram finding needs clarification with further examinations, you will be called and another appointment will be scheduled. This does not mean that you have a breast disease, but that your breasts cannot be examined with mammography alone. Further examinations may include magnification mammography or an ultrasound scan (if necessary, a breast biopsy will be performed).

How is mammography performed?

The mammogram only takes a few minutes. The visit, together with the preparation of documents and medical interviewing, usually lasts up to 30 minutes, after which you can continue your daily activities.

The examination procedure is performed by a radiology technician. You have to undress above the waist to have a mammogram. The radiology technician then alternately places your breasts between two flat plates to flatten out the breast tissue. Usually, two images are taken of each breast – one from the top and one from the side.

The radiology technician will stand behind a glass shield during the X-ray exposure. Once an image has been taken, the radiology technician will help you to change the position. During the X-ray exposure, you will be asked to stand still and hold your breath for a few seconds.

You may experience a slight discomfort as your breast is tightly compressed between the two plates for a few seconds. If you feel pain, be sure to tell the radiology technician.

Why is compression necessary during mammography?

- The breast tissue has different densities in different parts of the breast. The compression spreads the breast tissue evenly, so the denser areas do not obscure small masses.
- If the breast tissue is thinner, a lower radiation dose is sufficient to scan the breast.
- A compressed breast stays well place, making the mammogram clearer.

The result of the examination procedure

A radiologist will evaluate the images taken and send the result to your doctor. Receiving images on an information carrier (CD, memory stick) is subject to a fee. The price of the service is given in the price list of paid services on the website of East Tallinn Central Hospital www.itk.ee

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