Examinations are Important!!

Three kinds of exams can help in the early detection of breast cancer:
  · Mammography
  · Yearly doctor’s exams
  · Self-exams

To do a self-exam:
1. Look at each breast in the mirror to see if there is anything that you may not have noticed (discharge, change in looks of nipple, change in skin).

2. Still in the mirror, join your hands behind your neck and see if you notice any changes.

3. Do the same thing as above but with your hands on your hips.

4. When you are in the shower, raise your left arm. Use 3 or 4 fingers of your right hand and press the outer edge of your left breast. Press firmly onto your breast and move slowly in circles until you reach the nipple to check for any lumps or abnormalities. Make sure you examine the entire breast and armpit then gently squeeze your nipple to make sure there is no discharge. Repeat this procedure with your right breast.

5. Get out of the shower, dry off and lie on your back. Repeat the procedure listed in # 4 on both breasts.

If you notice any changes or have any concerns, contact your doctor right away.

Directions to Comprehensive Breast Center at North Decatur:
From North Decatur Road, turn into the main hospital entrance. The main hospital will be directly in front of you, and the 2665 & 2675 Professional Buildings will be to your right. At the stop sign, take a right. At the next stop sign, turn left and enter the main parking deck on your right.

The Comprehensive Breast Care Center is located in the lobby of the 2665 Professional Building (Suite 120) on the North Decatur Campus. If you park in the main parking deck, you will exit the deck and enter the 2665 Professional Building through the main entrance (next to the Valet station). The Comprehensive Breast Care Center will be immediately on your left.

Directions to Radiology at Hillandale:
Enter the hospital through the main entrance in front of the water fountain.
Once you walk through the front door, Registration will be on your right. After registering, you’ll walk just a few steps down the hall to Imaging, which is located across from the ATM machine. Mammography and Dexe patients should report to the 5900 building, which is on the opposite side of the hospital from the main entrance and ER entrance. Registration is immediately on the left as you walk through the front door of the 5900 building.

404.501.2660
www.dekalbmedical.org

© July 2010 10268
What is a Mammogram?

A mammogram is an X-ray image of your breast. It can help to detect breast changes that are too small or too deep to feel. Mammograms are usually considered safe, quick and relatively painless. They aid in early diagnosis of breast cancer.

The Breast Center now offers digital mammography. Some of the advantages of digital mammography are:

- Better contrast and brightness
- Greater magnification levels
- Better accuracy than film mammography
- Quicker appointment times
- Electronic storage
- Fewer “call back” appointments

During Your Test

Two types of mammograms may be recommended. Neither of these tests requires any preparation.

Screening Mammograms

Women without breast concerns should schedule a screening mammogram at 40 years of age. You will not need an order, but you should have the name of your referring physician available. This appointment will take approximately 20 minutes. You will be asked to undress from the waist up and be given a gown. Be prepared to answer detailed questions concerning your personal and family health history.

When you have a mammogram, the technologist will position each breast and take images. In order to do this, your breast is compressed or squeezed between an X-ray plate and a plastic plate. Both plates are attached to the mammogram machine. Your breast needs to be compressed to spread the tissue apart. This ensures that there will be very little movement, the image will be sharp and the exam can be done with a lower X-ray dose. Although the compression can be uncomfortable and even painful for some women, it only lasts a few seconds and is needed to produce a good mammogram image.

The entire procedure for your actual mammogram takes about 20 minutes, and the images are viewed immediately for technical evaluation. Keep in mind, though, that your appointment may last longer when you consider the time to register, wait for the technologist and speak to the radiologist, if needed.

Diabetic Mammograms

Your referring physician must order a diagnostic mammogram. Your experience will be mostly the same as your screening mammogram; however, additional time may be required for your visit.

You will likely be scheduled for a diagnostic mammogram if you:

- Are experiencing breast pain
- Have a lump
- Have had a stereo or ultrasound-guided biopsy in the past year
- Have nipple discharge that is clear or bloody
- Have a personal history of breast cancer in the last two years

After Your Test

Your mammogram will be reviewed by a board-certified radiologist. A Computer Aided Detection (CAD) system is also utilized in the reading of mammograms. CAD is designed to improve the process of mammography by detecting very subtle changes in breast tissue that even the best trained eye may miss. It provides a valuable second reading that increases the chance of diagnosing breast cancer in its early stages. During the interpretation of your images, if additional views are necessary you will be contacted. The radiologist will then make a dictation of your image findings and fax a report to your referring physician. Please follow your doctor’s directions to obtain your results.

Helpful Tips

- Schedule your mammogram when your breasts are the least tender. This will allow for optimal compression. The most likely time for this would be the week after the onset of your menstrual cycle (period).

- Bring your previous mammograms so we can compare your images and give you the best diagnostic evaluation possible.

- Abstain from using powders, deodorants or body cream on your chest and underarm areas.

- If possible, wear a two-piece outfit.

- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever about an hour before your mammogram. It really can help with the pain. Be sure to talk to your doctor before taking any medicines.

- Avoid caffeine for about a week before your mammogram as it can make your breasts more tender.

- If you feel pain during your mammogram, talk to the technician performing the test. Pain can be minimized by something as simple as repositioning your breast.