

# Breast Screenings: Know your options

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*For every 2,000 women receiving a mammography reading throughout 10 years, only 1 will have her life prolonged. In addition, 10 healthy women will be overdiagnosed and will receive unnecessary treatment<sup>1</sup>.*

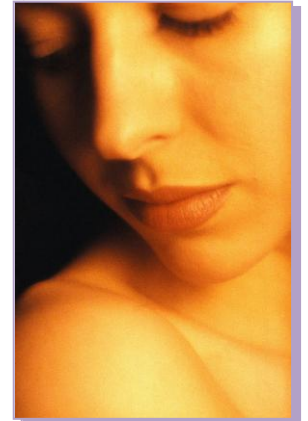
With annual mammograms recommended for women over the age of 40, breast cancer screening and technologies such as mammograms, MRI, and ultrasound have become indispensable to the medical community. Medtech Insight's market analyst provided a report in 2008 stating that breast cancer screening is a \$2.1 billion annual market projected to increase by 5.4% a year through 2013. Is it any wonder radiologists and the medical community are recommending these annually to every woman over the age of 40? Are these recommendations being made to best serve the patient or to better the market? You may think this is a very negative statement. However, before making a judgment, consider this: the American Cancer Society (ACS) has blatant conflicts of interest because of their close financial ties to makers of mammography equipment and cancer drugs.<sup>5</sup> While mammograms has their purpose in certain circumstances, we need to consider that these invasive techniques may not be our only options.

The recommendations are changing. CNN reports that in November of 2009, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force said that due to the less dense tissue of the breast under the age of 40, mammograms are less effective. The screenings become more accurate with older women. Therefore screening is recommended every two years after the age of 50 because it is currently well known that the more mammograms a woman has, the greater the chance she will get cancer due to the mechanical pressure and ionizing radiation from the mammogram procedure. However, the American Cancer Society did not revise their recommendations for mammography. To approach the controversial affects of mammography, it is the patient's right to know other options. The option known for its' early detection, accuracy, and safety in the breast screening field, is known as thermography.

Thermography technology, also known as thermal imaging, is a screening tool that has been approved by the FDA since 1982. Thermography provides a visual heat map of a patient's image in real time without use of radiation. Areas of increased heat due to inflammation and increased metabolic processes can be an early detection sign of a more serious condition developing...including cancer.

## Early Detection

How early can these blood vessels produced by malignancy show up? Growth of cancer cells take 5 years to reach 1 cm size which is the earliest size detected on a mammogram. However, thermography can detect physiological changes within the tissue 8 to 10 years before a mammogram can detect a mass. This gives a patient much more time to make positive changes in one's life to reduce tumor activity using less invasive interventions such as dietary change, hormonal balance, and physical activity.



## Advantages of Thermography

- Non Invasive
- No Radiation
- No painful compression
- Earliest method of detecting breast pathology
- Detection before sizable mass has formed
- Effective, accurate results for women with dense breasts, breast implants, and who've had mastectomy.
- When compared with x-rays, CT scans, ultrasound and MRI's, thermography has the unique ability to show physiological and metabolic changes.
- Is safe for pregnant and lactating women.

## Accurate

The accuracy of thermal imaging has been well published. An abnormal thermogram is 10 times more significant than a first order of family history. One study showed that thermal imaging predicted 97% of the malignant biopsies that were performed.<sup>1</sup> Another large study using more than 4,700 patients with confirmed carcinomas compared clinical examination, mammography, and thermography sensitivities. Reported accuracy for clinical examination was 75%, mammography was 80%, and thermography was 88%.<sup>1</sup>

A study reported by the National Cancer Institute concluded that for every 1,000 women screened by mammography, only 0.7 deaths from breast cancer would be prevented and 470 women would receive false positive readings (the women were told they had cancer when the test results were actually normal). The false positive readings resulted in anxiety, unnecessary biopsies, surgery, and radiation.

## Safe

Thermography is safe with NO contraindications and is a non-invasive procedure. Critics of mammography mention adverse effects of compression, radiation, and false positives of mammography screenings.

The compression applied by mammograms can potentially rupture cysts and spread existing cancer cells. During a thermogram procedure, the patient is not touched in any manner and no compression is applied.

The female breast tissue is highly susceptible to radiation effects. The radiation given off by a mammogram can increase risk of breast cancer, especially if applied at ages under 50 when the breast tissue is less dense. According to Russell L. Blaylock, MD, it is estimated that annual mammograms can increase one's risk of breast cancer by 2% per year. After 10 years the risk will have increased 20 percent<sup>1</sup>. There is no radiation given off by a thermogram.

According to the American College of Radiology, 5-15% of mammograms require additional testing. False positives of mammograms can cause stress and anxiety, financial burdens, and unnecessary biopsies. In fact, 70-80% of biopsies of positive mammograms do not show any presence of cancer<sup>4</sup>. *"Women deserve the truth -- and the truth is the evidence says this is not always helpful and can be harmful."* Fran Visco, president of the National Breast Cancer Coalition, commenting on mammograms.

## Action

Typically the first thermography scan is used to set a baseline. Follow-ups will vary depending on your age, health risk and past test results. Generally, women ages 18-39 should have a follow up every 3 years; women ages 40+ should have one every year. It is suggested that women start getting Breast Thermography as early as 18 years old. Forty-four percent of women with an abnormal thermogram develop breast cancer within 10 years if no preventative steps are taken. This number falls to 0.4% if the thermogram is normal.

**Thermography can be used in conjunction with special our nutritional services to provide another great way to identify health issues and monitor your health progress.**

Please contact our office to learn more about how we can assist with your health goals.

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Bizzaro N, Mazzanti G, et al., Diagnostic accuracy of the anti-citrulline antibody assay for rheumatoid arthritis. Clin Chem. 2001 Jun;47(6):1089-93

<sup>1</sup> American Association for Clinical Chemistry, November 26, 2008

<sup>1</sup> Mann, Denise. Alternative Treatments for Arthritis: Experts look at the pros and cons of alternative arthritis therapies. October 4, 2010

Federal Law requires that we warn you of the following:

1. Your individual health status and any required health care treatments can only be properly addressed by a professional healthcare provider of your choice. Remember: There is no adequate substitution for a personal consultation with your chosen health care provider. Therefore, we encourage you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.

2. The Constitution guarantees you the right to be your own physician and to prescribe for your own health.