

Mammograms for women with breast implants

If you have breast implants, you should still get regular screening mammograms. However, if you have implants, you need to tell the technologist before starting the mammogram and you should also be aware that it may be hard for the doctor to see certain parts of your breast.

The x-rays used in mammograms cannot go through silicone or saline implants well enough to show the breast tissue under them. This means that the part of the breast tissue covered by the implant won't be seen on the mammogram.

Very rarely, mammograms can rupture an implant. It's important to tell the technologist you have implants before your mammogram is started. In fact, it's best to mention this when you make the appointment to have your mammogram done. This way you can find out if the facility has experience doing mammograms in women with breast implants.

So the doctor can see as much breast tissue as possible, women with implants have 4 extra pictures done (2 on each breast), as well as the 4 standard pictures taken during a screening mammogram. In these extra pictures, called *implant displacement* (ID) views, the implant is pushed back against the chest wall and the breast is pulled forward over it. This allows better imaging of the front part of each breast.

Implant displacement views are more difficult to do and can be uncomfortable in women who have had hard scar tissue form around the implants (called *contractures*). They're easier in women whose implants are placed underneath (behind) the chest muscles