



# Breast Cancer Screening Guide for Patients

## How to Use This Guide

This guide will help you prepare for a breast cancer screening and ask for accommodations.

To best identify the accommodations you need, please use this guide together with [Health Care Accommodations: My Checklist](#).

The **Breast Cancer Screening Guide** focuses only on accommodations needed for breast cancer screening. **Health Care Accommodations: My Checklist** has other accommodations considerations like interpreters, accessible tables, or communication support.



**Note:** This guide uses the word *doctor*, but you may see a different type of health care professional, like a nurse practitioner or physician assistant. The information in this guide also applies to them.



**Health Care  
Accommodations:  
My Checklist**  
Visit [bit.ly/3HatJoy](https://bit.ly/3HatJoy)  
Scan QR code at left

## Getting Started

### Best time to start:

One to two weeks before your appointment.

### You can complete this guide:

On your own or with a trusted support person.

### How to fill it out:

- Print it out and write in your answers
- Fill it out electronically and save or print it out



## Instructions

1. Complete **Health Care Accommodations: My Checklist**.
2. **Read** about different ways to get screened for breast cancer.
3. **Select** any accommodations you need.
4. **Write questions** you have for your doctor, insurance company, and local resources for this screening.
5. **Finalize** your breast cancer screening plan.

## Tips for Success

- **Take breaks.** Complete this guide one section at a time.
- **Focus on what matters most.** You do not have to answer every question.
- **Ask for help** if you need it.
- **Bring your completed Health Care Accommodations Checklist and this guide** to your appointment and share with your health care team.

## What to Expect



### What is Breast Cancer?

A type of cancer that occurs when cells in the breast grow out of control. It is important to screen every two years, even if you do not feel sick. It is easier to treat the earlier it is found.

### Who Needs This Screening?

- Women and people assigned female at birth (people who were born with female body parts) need breast cancer screening starting at age 40.
- You should get screened until age 74, or as long as your doctor says it is right for you.
- This screening may not be recommended for men, people assigned male at birth, and people who have had a double mastectomy. Talk to your doctor about your risk of breast cancer.
- Some people may have different screening recommendations than in this guide. **Follow the schedule you and your doctor discuss.**

## Your Screening Options

### Option 1: 2D Mammogram

This is the most common screening type.

#### What happens during the screening?

1. Remove your clothes from the waist up.
2. Put on a hospital gown that opens in the front.
3. A person who takes X-rays will place your breast on a clear plastic plate.  
Another plate comes down from above to gently squeeze your breast.
4. Hold your breath for a few seconds while the X-ray is taken.
5. This is done from different angles for each breast.



*Mammogram*

#### How often would I need this type of screening?

If the results of your mammogram are normal, then you need to get screened **at least every two years.**

### Option 2: 3D Mammogram

- 3D can see through thick tissue better than 2D. This is helpful for people with dense or thick breast tissue.
- Insurance may or may not cover this option.

#### What happens during the screening?

- 3D mammograms are similar to 2D mammograms in how your breast are placed and squeezed.
- The machine takes many X-ray images from different angles. This creates a 3D picture of your breast.
- 3D mammograms may take longer than 2D mammograms.



*Mammogram machine*

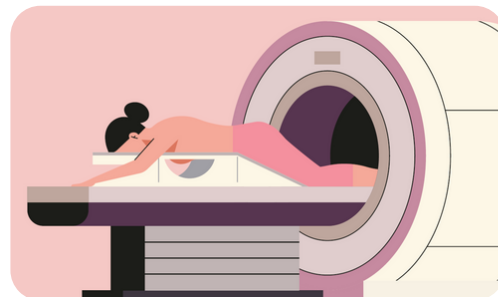
#### How often would I need this type of screening?

If the results of your mammogram are normal, then you need to get screened **at least every two years.**

## Alternative: Breast MRI

Women and people assigned female at birth who are at higher risk of breast cancer often have a breast MRI along with a mammogram. You may be at higher risk if you have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer, certain genetic changes, or have had chest radiation treatments.

If you feel you cannot have a mammogram even with accommodations, then talk to your doctor and check with your insurance to see if a breast MRI might be right for you instead of a mammogram.



Breast MRI

### What happens during the test?

1. Lie face down on a table with openings for your breasts.
2. Dye is usually put into your arm through a small tube (IV) to help take better pictures.
3. The table slides into the MRI machine, which uses magnets and radio waves to take detailed pictures.
4. The screening takes 30 to 45 minutes, and you need to lie very still.

### How often would I need this type of screening?

Talk to your doctor about how often you would need this type of screening.

## Accommodations You Can Ask For

Doctors must help and support your needs within reason. This is called **reasonable accommodations**. A doctor may not be able to provide every accommodation you ask for.

If they cannot accommodate you, then they should talk with you about other options for getting the care you need.

On the next page is a list of accommodations you may need for your breast cancer screening.



## Accommodations for Breast Cancer Screening

### Instructions:

Check the box next to each accommodation you may need.  
Bring this checklist to your appointment.

### During the Screening:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Visual cues (e.g., hand signals or turning lights on or off to show when to hold my breath)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Height-adjustable equipment that lowers enough for a wheelchair
<input type="checkbox"/>	Explain how I will need to breathe, and ask me about my breathing abilities before we start
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff explains each step as the screening is happening, so I know what to expect

### Other Accommodations I Need:

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Questions to Ask



### Questions for My Doctor's Office:

Ask the receptionist these questions when you call to schedule your appointment or call any time before your visit.

***“I have a list of accommodations that would support me during my breast cancer screening. Can you review this list and tell me which ones your office can provide?”***

***Does your technician have any experience supporting [my accommodation or individual consideration] with a mammogram?***

***Other questions for my doctor's office:***

## Questions to Ask



### Questions for My Doctor:

***“What other screening options are there if a mammogram cannot be accessible to me?”***

***“Would a Breast MRI be appropriate for me?”***

Breast MRI is an option for me

Breast MRI is NOT an option for me

***“Are there any risks with this screening option?”***

***“If I have had a mastectomy or breast surgery, how does this change my screening options?”***

***“How often do I need to get my breast cancer screening?”***

***Other questions for my doctor:***



## Questions to Ask Insurance:

Call the number on your insurance card or visit your insurance online portal (if available).

***“What breast cancer screening options does my insurance cover?”***

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2D Mammograms | <input type="checkbox"/> Breast MRIs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3D Mammograms | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:      |

***Other questions for insurance:***



## Questions to Ask About Local Resources

To find accessible screening locations, contact your local health department, disability organizations (call 211), search [www.findhelp.org](http://www.findhelp.org), or ask your doctor's office.

***“Which health care facilities near me have mammography equipment that is accessible to me?”***

***“Are there mobile mammography clinics that might be more accessible to me?”***

***Other questions about local resources:***

# My Plan for Breast Cancer Screening

## Type of screening I will get:

- 2D Mammogram
- 3D Mammogram
- Breast MRI
- Other:

## My Appointment



Date of my appointment:

Time of my appointment:



Location of my appointment:

Address:

Directions to the office:

Accessible parking or drop-off location:

Accessible entrance and elevator location:

# Screening for All



## Making preventive health screenings accessible for everyone.

More resources available at  
[mcd.org/screening-for-all](https://mcd.org/screening-for-all)



**Screening For All** is an initiative funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) to address the significant barriers people with disabilities face in accessing preventive health screenings.

Developed by MCD Global Health, this project provides patients and health care practitioners with evidence-based tools and resources to make preventive health screenings accessible to all patients. Questions or comments can be sent to [info@mcd.org](mailto:info@mcd.org).

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