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Breast Thermography

Utah Thermography, LLC is pleased to offer breast cancer screening with breast thermology. Technological advances in digital imaging over the last fifteen years have ushered thermology into the 21st Century. The timing is right - the American Cancer Society reports there has been a 178 percent increase in breast cancer since 1969. Yet survival rates remain unchanged for that same time period. The best hope for improved breast cancer treatment outcomes lies in earlier detection.

Advantages of Thermography for Breast Cancer Screening

- Safe, easy, and pain free
- No radiation exposure
- No compression of breast tissue
- Detects changes in breast tissue that accompany the smallest of tumors
- Entire breast can be imaged
- Differentiates between fibrocystic breast disease and tumors
- Effectively and safely screens breasts with implants
- Useful for evaluating chest wall after breast surgery
- Effective for breasts of all sizes
- Creates opportunities for early intervention

Currently, the most utilized breast cancer screening imaging techniques are ultrasound and mammography. Because they detect the presence of a physical mass, they are classified as anatomical tests. They are interpreted by radiologists.

Breast thermography detects patterns of heat produced from the increased circulation produced by abnormal metabolic activity in cancer cells. Thus, thermography is a physiological test. Thermograms are interpreted by thermologists.

Breast thermography combines advanced digital technology with ultra-sensitive infrared camera imaging to create a significant advance in the safe and early screening for breast cancer.

Thermology: The Science Behind Breast Thermography

Normal (non-cancerous) tissue has a blood supply that is under the control of the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS can either increase or decrease blood flow to cells. Abnormal tissue (cancerous and

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pre-cancerous), on the other hand, ensures its own survival by secreting chemicals that override this ANS regulation, thereby ensuring its own steady blood supply. Cancer can be thought of as being “off the power grid” of the body.

When the hands are placed in cold water, an ANS reflex occurs in the breasts. Generally speaking, this reflex causes the blood vessels in non-cancerous tissue to constrict, but does not result in constriction of blood vessels supplying cancerous tissues. The resulting difference in blood flow can result in cancer showing up as “hot spots” on thermograms.

Scientific signs and criteria established by the American Academy of Thermology are used to interpret thermogram data.

Breast Thermology does not diagnose breast cancer; rather it detects physiological changes in breast tissue that have been shown to correlate with the presence of cancer or pre-cancerous states. Breast cancer is diagnosed by pathologists’ microscopic examination of breast tissue.

Who Is a Candidate for Breast Thermography?

Breast thermography is the choice for any woman, regardless of age or breast size, who seek a painless and radiation-free procedure to screen for breast cancer.

The American Cancer Society says women are at risk for breast cancer if they:

- began menstruating before age 12
- have not borne children
- bore their first child after age 30
- stopped menstruating after age 50
- have a personal history or family history of breast cancer
- have a personal history of radiation exposure to the chest
- are currently taking or have recently taken hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for longer than five years
- are obese

We recommend that women having one or more risk factors have annual breast thermograms.

What Happens During a Breast Thermogram?

The first of two series of images of the breasts are taken after the patient disrobes above the waist and acclimates to room temperature for ten minutes. The second set is taken after the hands are submerged in cold water for one minute.

There’s no radiation, no compression and no pain. Having a thermogram is as easy as having your picture taken.

What If Breast Thermogram Results Are Positive?

All medical screening tests, including thermography and mammography, are just that - screening tests. Any positive screening test requires further evaluation. Breast thermograms receive one of five ratings that range

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from TH1 (no detectable thermal abnormalities) to TH5 (detection of thermal abnormalities correlating with very significant risk for breast cancer). Early thermal abnormalities may result in a recommendation to repeat thermography for comparison in 60-120 days. Depending on the thermology rating and clinical findings, a referral may be made for targeted ultrasound or to a breast specialist for possible biopsy.

Physicians trained in holistic medicine may also recommend nutritional, metabolic, environmental, or lifestyle interventions to address early thermal abnormalities.

Breast thermography is not covered by Medicare or other insurance providers. Payment is requested at the time services are rendered.

We accept self-referrals and referrals from healthcare practitioners. Self-referred patients may opt to see a GSMC healthcare practitioner for a brief targeted breast history and clinical breast exam on the day of their thermographic imaging.

Thermography is a screening tool for breast cancer that is best utilized with regular breast self-exams (BSE) and annual clinical breast exams (CBE) by a healthcare professional.

Instructions for Breast Thermogram

1. Avoid natural or artificial tanning for one week prior to your thermogram.
2. Refrain from saunas, steam baths, and hot or cold packs for at least 24 hours prior to your thermogram. Do not bathe, shower, or exercise during the hour prior to your thermogram appointment. Wait for 36 hours after a high fever before having a thermogram.
3. Refrain from using any tobacco products and consuming any caffeine including caffeinated coffee, tea, or sodas for two hours prior to your thermogram.
4. Remove large jewelry prior to imaging; however, small necklaces actually enable the thermogram technician to sharpen the focus of your thermogram.
5. Allow up to 30 additional minutes to acclimate to our indoor temperature prior to your thermogram if you have been overheated or chilled by environmental extremes such as a very hot car in the summer or cold wintry weather.
6. Avoid shaving your underarms or applying any underarm deodorants or antiperspirants in addition to all powders, creams, or lotions on your arms or chest on the day of your thermogram.
7. Avoid any physical exam or compression of your breasts including self-examination of the breasts, mammography, or ultrasound of the breast for at least 24 hours prior to your scheduled breast thermogram.
8. Wait three months after breast surgery or completion of chemotherapy and/or radiation before having a thermogram.

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