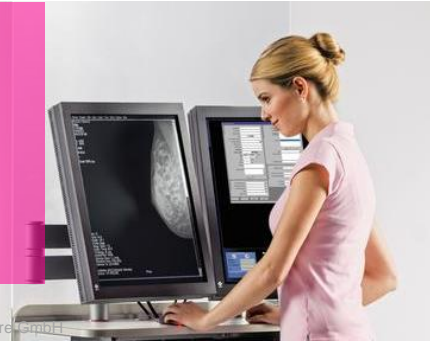


## What does digital mammography mean for me?

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### ***Digital Mammography at BreastCheck***

Starting December 2015, we began to replace our analog (film) mammography equipment with digital mammography systems. This change is part of the Provincial Digital Mammography Implementation Project (DMIP) which started in September 2015 and has a target completion date of April 2016. At the end of this project, all breast imaging at BreastCheck, including at our permanent and mobile clinics, will be digital. This sheet will help you understand what the change from analog mammography to digital mammography means for you.

### ***What is the difference between analog mammography and digital mammography?***

The difference between analog mammography and digital mammography is how the image of the breast is created and stored. Replacing analog mammography with digital mammography is similar to the way digital cameras have replaced cameras that use film. Analog mammography captures x-ray images on film which then requires developing. Digital mammography converts x-rays to digital images which can be viewed within seconds on a secure computer work station. The images are stored electronically rather than transferred to film.

### ***Does digital mammography use radiation?***

Digital mammography is an x-ray of the breast tissue and therefore uses radiation. However, the amount of radiation may be lower than the amount used in analog mammography, which is already very low.

### ***Will you still compress my breasts? Why?***

For you, the client, the experience of having a digital mammogram will be very similar to having an analog mammogram. All mammograms, whether analog or digital, are done using compression. Compression is needed to flatten and thin out the tissue of the breast, and to keep it still. This makes it easier to see the tissue inside the breast, helps to provide a clear image of the breast tissue, and lessens the amount of radiation needed to capture the image.

### ***Is digital mammography more accurate than analog mammography?***

As a screening test for breast cancer, digital mammography is no more, or no less accurate than analog mammography.

### ***What are the benefits of digital mammography?***

Although the experience of the test for you, the client, is very similar, there are many benefits of digital mammography including:

- Improved patient care
  - The total time of your appointment may be less. The technologist taking your mammogram will be able to see your images immediately on the computer screen in the exam room. If needed, she will be able to retake images before you leave the room, or screening clinic.
  - Although digital mammography uses radiation, the dose may be lower than with analog mammography.
  - If needed, the images can be easily shared electronically with other health centers, or health care providers, which may decrease wait times.
  
- Improved work environment and workflow
  - Because images are made and kept as digital files, the chemicals used to develop the x-ray film in analog mammography are not needed.
  - There are no films or physical charts to handle.
  - Less physical storage space is needed.
  - More options are available for the radiologist when reading the images. For example, the radiologist can zoom in on areas of the image to take a closer look.
  
- Digital mammography is more accurate than film screen for diagnosing cancer in women younger than 50 years, those with dense breast tissue, and pre or peri-menopausal women.

### ***What happens to the images that I had taken using analog mammography?***

Women who had an analog mammogram with BreastCheck (previous participants of our program) have film images that are stored in physical files at BreastCheck. When a woman books her appointment to return for her next regular screening mammogram, BreastCheck will digitize her previous mammogram films so they can be used by the radiologist to compare with the digital images of her current digital mammogram. All analog films are kept for a period of ten years, and are stored and managed in compliance with the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA).