

## Breast Cancer and Mammograms

### Who is at risk for breast cancer?

Being a woman puts you at higher risk for developing breast cancer than being a man. As you age, your risk increases. That's why you should continue regularly scheduled clinical breast exams, mammograms and monthly self-exams throughout your life.

You may be at higher than average risk if you:

- ❖ Have already had breast cancer
- ❖ Had a close relative (mother, sister or daughter) who has had breast cancer
- ❖ Been diagnosed with a breast condition such as atypical hyperplasia
- ❖ Had two or more biopsies for noncancerous breast disease
- ❖ Have alterations in specific genes such as BRCA1 and BRCA2

Most women who develop breast cancer don't have a family history of the disease or fall into one of the other high-risk categories. You shouldn't feel "safe" just because you don't fit into one of the categories listed above.

### When should I start getting a mammogram?

Mammography is the best method available for diagnosing breast cancer in earlier, more treatable stages. The American Cancer Society recommends that women age 40 and over who are not having symptoms should have an annual mammogram plus a clinical breast exam and should perform monthly breast self-examination. For women ages 20 to 39, the society recommends a clinical breast exam every three years plus monthly breast self-examination.

### Take control

- ❖ Gather as much information as possible about your family history of cancer and breast cancer.
- ❖ Talk to your doctor about scheduling a screening mammogram.
- ❖ Learn to correctly perform breast self-examinations and schedule an annual breast exam with your physician.