



# Breast Cancer Screening for Ages 40 to 49

## I'm in my 40s. Should I get a mammogram? If so, how often?

We recommend you consider the pros and cons of starting routine mammogram screening between ages 40 and 49. You might decide to start getting regular mammogram screenings at 40, sometime in your 40s, or wait until age 50.

If you're a transgender individual, discuss your breast cancer screening needs with your doctor.

## Why might I choose to start getting mammograms now?

For those ages 40 to 49 at average risk, the main reason to get a mammogram is that it's the only screening test proven to reduce the risk of breast cancer death. The research shows that screening mammograms may prevent death for less than 1 out of 1,000 women who get them between the ages of 40 to 49.

## Why might I decide to wait until I'm 50?

In general, if you're under age 50, you're at a lower risk for breast cancer. You might decide to wait until age 50 to start getting mammograms because they can lead to unnecessary tests, such as more imaging or a biopsy for "false positive" results.

A mammogram exposes you to radiation—the same amount you'd get in daily life in about 7 weeks. The risk from radiation from mammograms is low, but the benefit is less clear than when you're older.

## How common is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer for women in the U.S., affecting 1 in 8 women at some time in their life. Fortunately, the survival rate is very high, especially when detected early by a screening mammogram.

## How do I know if I'm at higher risk?

You may be at higher risk for breast cancer if any of these apply to you:

- Personal history of breast cancer, or a prior biopsy showing precancer cells.
- First-degree relative (mother, daughter, or sister) with breast or ovarian cancer.
- Second-degree relative (aunt, niece, grandmother, granddaughter) with breast cancer before age 50 or ovarian cancer at any age.
- You or a first-degree relative tested positive for a breast cancer gene.
- Male breast cancer in your family.
- Prior chest radiation therapy.



## Should I schedule an appointment if my risk is higher?

If you're at higher risk, talk with your doctor about when to start routine mammogram screenings. If you see or feel any changes in your breasts, schedule an appointment online or call our Appointment and Advice Call Center at 866-454-8855.

## How can I lower my risk?

These lifestyle recommendations may help lower your risk of developing breast cancer:

- Get moderate exercise (such as brisk walking). Aim for 2½ hours per week.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Eat a diet high in fiber that includes fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains.
- Limit alcohol use, if you drink.
- Stop smoking or vaping, if you do.
- Breastfeed your baby, if you can.

## How much does it cost?

At Kaiser Permanente, mammograms are usually provided without a copay, as a preventive care procedure. To learn what preventive services are covered by your health plan, call our Member Services Contact Center at 800-464-4000. Or review your Evidence of Coverage (EOC) or Certificate of Insurance.