

# Q&A with Dr. Stephen Montgomery

## TOPIC: DIGITAL MAMMOGRAPHY



*Stephen Montgomery, MD, is medical director of Crouse Hospital's Breast Health Center. Board certified in mammography, Dr. Montgomery pioneered the use of the stereotactic breast biopsy procedure in Syracuse 14 years ago and started the area's first breast MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) program in 1997.*

Every day we learn more about breast cancer and how to win the battle. One fact is clear: the distinct advantage of early detection. Fortunately, breast cancer is highly detectable through digital mammography screening. If caught early, before it spreads, 96 percent of women will be alive five years later. The earlier breast cancer is discovered and treated, the better the chance of survival.

### **How do digital mammograms differ from conventional film?**

It's like comparing an older camera that uses traditional film to a new digital camera. How the images are captured and what healthcare providers can do with them sets digital apart. A digital mammogram lets your doctor focus in on areas of concern, which enhances readability and interpretation of the image.

### **Why the switch to digital?**

Digital mammography allows the image to be stored and transferred throughout the care network. Images can also be manipulated after the exposure is taken, which means we can magnify them for a closer look, or make changes in contrast, which also helps us hone in more precisely than we could do with traditional film mammography.

### **When should I have a mammogram?**

If you're a woman 40 and over, you should have a mammogram every year to check for abnormalities or lumps that may indicate early stages of breast cancer. Mammograms can see cancerous lesions earlier than you can feel them with a self-exam.

### **How long will my digital mammogram take?**

It takes less time than with a film mammogram because there are no films to develop—usually about 10 to 15 minutes. The compression and positioning are the same as traditional mammography, but with less waiting time and far fewer call backs.

### **Does a digital mammogram involve any radiation?**

Yes, but less than with film mammography.

### **Is digital mammography better for patients who have dense breasts? What is the difference between dense and fatty breasts?**

Younger women tend to have more fibro-glandular tissue that can appear dense on mammogram images. Because digital images can be manipulated after exposure, your radiologist can "see" through the dense tissue more reliably than with film mammography. Older women tend to have less fibro-glandular tissue and the breast appears less dense (or fatty) in a mammogram.

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*For more information about digital mammography at Crouse Hospital, or to schedule your next mammogram, call (315) 470-5880.*



# Digital Mammography is here.

