

Navigating Breast Cancer Research: A Guide to Early Detection

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Thanks in large part to the growing wave of technological advancements, we are learning more each year about new methods to detect and diagnose breast cancer earlier. New research findings are published regularly, giving the public more access to information about breast exams and mammograms than ever before.

However, the abundance of research and inconsistent recommendations for screening have raised questions among patients about when and how often they should be examined in order to protect themselves. As a radiologist specializing in breast imaging for East Valley-based EVDI Medical Imaging, I often hear first-hand the number of questions and concerns that patients have surrounding breast cancer research.

Navigating the latest information can be confusing, however there are several proactive steps that I recommend to help women protect their health. ? **Self-Exams** – Not only can self-exams establish a baseline of healthy breast tissue, they can also indicate when something is wrong. Discuss with your doctor the best methods for a self-exam to ensure you are not missing any steps or angles.

Clinical Exams – Self-exams can identify the first signs of a problem, but it is still important to seek the guidance of a medical professional as well. While clinical exams are done less often, seeing your doctor regularly may help detect a change that has occurred subtly over time.

Regular Screening Mammograms – Self and clinical exams are less invasive ways to detect changes, but an inside look at breast tissue with regular screening mammograms is also needed. Once your doctor knows your family history and is familiar with your health records, ask him or her how frequently you should receive mammograms and follow through on scheduling future appointments.

Prepare for Appointments – Go to doctor appointments with a list of any questions you might have and ask for informational pamphlets to reference later. Learn about your family history and current condition, as this can be helpful in making better decisions down the line.

These are just a few recommendations to help you monitor your overall health, but I also recommend maintaining an open dialogue with your doctor to understand the latest information. This can help create a custom plan that suits your individual needs.

Dr. Thuy Vo is a radiologist specializing in breast imaging for EVDI Medical Imaging, the Valley's leading imaging center. For more information on EVDI Medical Imaging and its East Valley locations, visit www.evdi.com.

