

# The Mammography Debate

## What You Need to Know

By Dr. Michael J. Fox, Partner, Upright Imaging Center



**F**ear of developing breast cancer is a genuine concern for many women. Not only have they been encouraged to conduct monthly breast self exams, but once they reached the age of 40, they were told to include yearly mammograms as part of their health care regimen.

For almost two decades, this has been the status quo as recommended by the American Cancer Society and the American Medical Association. But two months ago, a startling new report was released that has women all over the country scared, confused and concerned. Should they be getting annual mammograms or not, and at what age should they begin?

### The Report and Its Findings

The U.S. Preventative Task Force, a government-sponsored group comprised of leading scientists, released a report stating that most women don't need routine mammograms in their 40s. According to the report, if these women are healthy and are at low risk for breast cancer, they should begin getting mammograms at the age of 50 (not 40), and continue to do so every two years thereafter. This is a complete contradiction to what's been preached for years! The report also stated that breast self

exams do no good and that women shouldn't be taught to do them.

### What This Means to YOU

It's important to remember that the new guidelines are for the general population and are not directed to those who are at high risk for breast cancer due to family history or gene mutation. Women of high risk should continue following the recommendations of their doctors and adhere to the medical protocol that has been provided. But for healthy women in their 40s and beyond, these new findings present valid reason for question and concern.

### Now What?

There's no doubt that these new breast cancer screening guidelines have caused quite a bit of controversy, uncertainty and anxiety. For many

women, getting a mammogram is stressful enough. But with the task force's recent findings, women in their 40s have the added stress of determining whether or not they should have a mammogram at all! And, those who are older need to decide if they should be getting them every year, or every other year, as the report suggests.

### There Are Options

Realizing that mammography has its flaws, including painful compression of the breasts, a high rate of false positives (leading to unnecessary biopsies) and exposure to radiation (which can lead to an increased risk of developing cancer), many women have decided to turn to thermography as their breast cancer screening of choice. And, our facility is one of the few in the entire state of Illinois to offer it.

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***DON'T BECOME A BREAST CANCER STATISTIC***  
***EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES***  
***JOIN US AND GET THE FACTS!***

Dr. Fox and his staff will be available to answer your thermography questions during two Open House events.  
 Get the information you need to make an educated decision about today's breast cancer screening options.

*Invite your friends*  
*&*  
*choose the date that's best for you!*


Can't make it? Present this ad to receive \$100 OFF your first (baseline) breast thermography visit.\*  
 \*Regular price \$225. With this ad, pay ONLY \$125.  
 Offer expires 3/15/10

- Wednesday, January 27th: 9-11 a.m.
- Wednesday, February 3rd: 7-9 p.m.

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 Thermography Demonstrations and More!



# Not Sure About Mammography? Consider Thermography

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## What is Thermography?

Thermography is a heat imaging screening technique that does not use radiation or breast compression to detect tumors. Instead, it uses a high-resolution camera that reads the temperature of the breasts and then converts it into an infrared heat image for evaluation.

These thermal (heat) images are then analyzed for abnormalities that may be signs of cancer and other diseases. Healthy breast tissue usually registers as blue, green or yellow, while cancerous tissue will present itself as red or orange.

## The Advantages of Breast Thermography

Breast cancer is a major health concern for women of all ages. Thankfully, nearly all breast cancers can be treated successfully if they are found early enough. Breast thermography offers women the earliest possible detection of cancer by spotting irregular heat patterns (“hot spots”), which often occur before a noticeable lump has even been formed. Unfortunately, by the time a mass is spotted through mammography, the tumor is already years into its growth cycle.

## Why It Works – How Cancer Grows

For cancer cells to grow faster than the surrounding tissue, they need additional blood flow. To get the additional blood flow, these cancer cells not only tell the body to build new blood vessels, but they also tell it to supply the greatest possible volume of blood from the existing blood vessels. Breast thermography detects the increased blood flow that is needed by cancer cells in their early development by measuring the amount of heat radiating from the skin. The more blood flow, the more heat. All cells of the body produce heat through their normal function, but diseased cells like cancer, usually produce more heat in their earliest stages (before a tumor develops). This is why thermography is such an important screening for the first signs of breast cancer.

## Breast Thermography is EASY

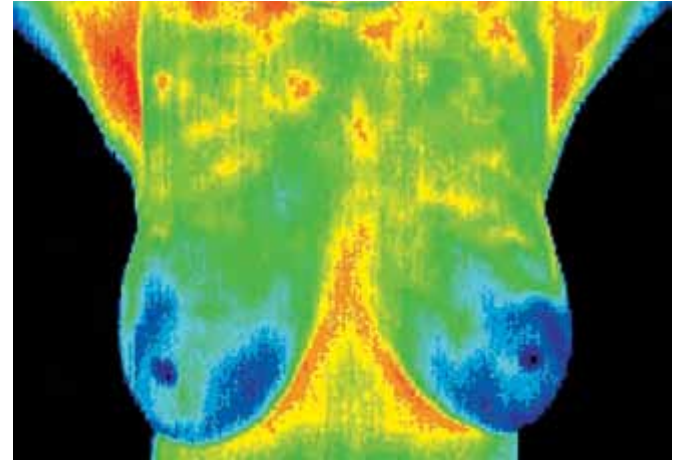
With thermography (which is FDA approved), there is no pain, no compression and no radiation! Patients are positioned in front of the thermal imaging camera while a technician takes some digital pictures. Within 5-15 minutes, the test is complete. The pictures are then read and analyzed to determine the amount of heat and the symmetry of the heat patterns, which may indicate breast disease. A report of findings is typically provided within 24-48 hours. It's simple, pain-free and non-invasive!

## Two Scans Recommended

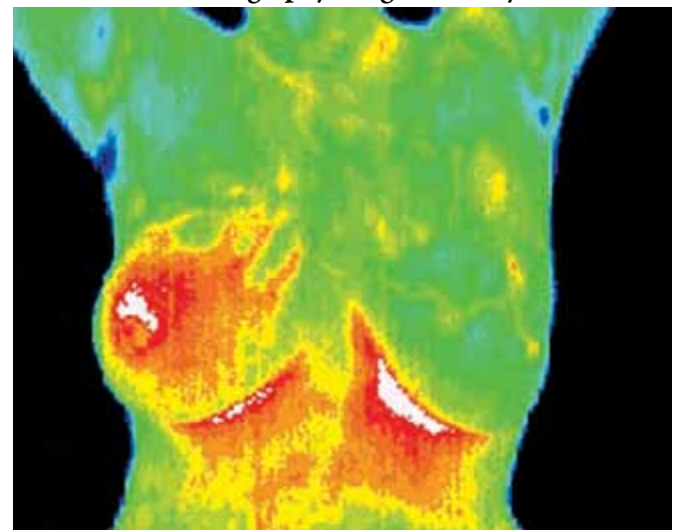
It is strongly advised that patients have two breast thermography scans within a 3-4 month period. The first acts as a baseline, and the second is used as a comparative measure. Active cancers double in size and heat approximately 100 days apart. If there are any increased heat patterns and/or vascular changes from the first breast scan to the second, additional tests would be requested, such as an ultrasound or MRI. If there are no changes from the first to the second scan, breast thermography would then be recommended on an annual basis.

## It's Up To You

While thermography is still not as widely used and available as mammography, it is becoming more prevalent as women recognize its importance and effectiveness. Not only is it safe, painless and FDA approved, but it has been found to detect the earliest warning signs of cancerous activity – years before a tumor is formed! If you'd like to learn more about the benefits of thermography, please visit our website at [www.uprightimagingcenter.com](http://www.uprightimagingcenter.com) or consider attending one of our upcoming events.



Breast Thermography Image - Healthy Breasts



Breast Thermography Image - Inflammatory Cancer

## Of Special Interest

Terry Grossman, MD has co-authored a book called *Transcend: Nine Steps to Living Well Forever*, in which he recommends thermography breast cancer screenings beginning at age 25. According to Grossman, studies comparing thermography with mammography have found the two procedures to be very close in their ability to detect cancer. He also notes that thermography has existed for 45 years and numerous published studies have reported a very high degree of diagnostic accuracy. Something to think about!