

## Information for Women About Computer-Aided Detection (CAD) & Screening Mammograms

Computer-aided detection (CAD) is a tool that may help a radiologist review your screening mammogram. CAD is offered at some clinics and there may be a charge. At this time, evidence about the benefits and risks of using CAD are unclear. You are under no obligation to pay for CAD. Choosing not to pay for this tool will in no way affect your ability to get a screening mammogram free of charge.

The following information about CAD is taken from the *Canadian Cancer Encyclopedia* (Canadian Cancer Society, 2011):

Researchers are studying a technique called **computer-aided detection (CAD)** to see if it is helpful at finding breast cancer in screening mammograms. CAD computer software looks for tissue changes in a mammogram that may indicate the presence of breast cancer. By using CAD, doctors hope to lessen the impact of human error that is associated with reading mammograms – some radiologists may find slight changes in mammograms that are potentially cancer, while others may not. Several studies have found that CAD improves the accuracy of breast cancer screening, but other studies have found that it does not. CAD appears to have a higher recall rate, which may lead to further testing, including biopsies, without actually detecting more breast cancers. This may cause unnecessary anxiety in women who become worried that they have breast cancer when they really don't. Some studies have found that having 2 radiologists look at screening mammograms improves the accuracy of finding breast cancer early and that this approach is better than using CAD. More research is needed to see if CAD improves breast cancer detection by mammography (*Radiology*, [PMID 20656831](#); *Archives of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, [PMID 19023581](#); *New England Journal of Medicine*, [PMID 18832239](#); *AJR: American Journal of Roentgenology*, [PMID 18356428](#); *European Journal of Cancer*, [PMID 18353630](#)).

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