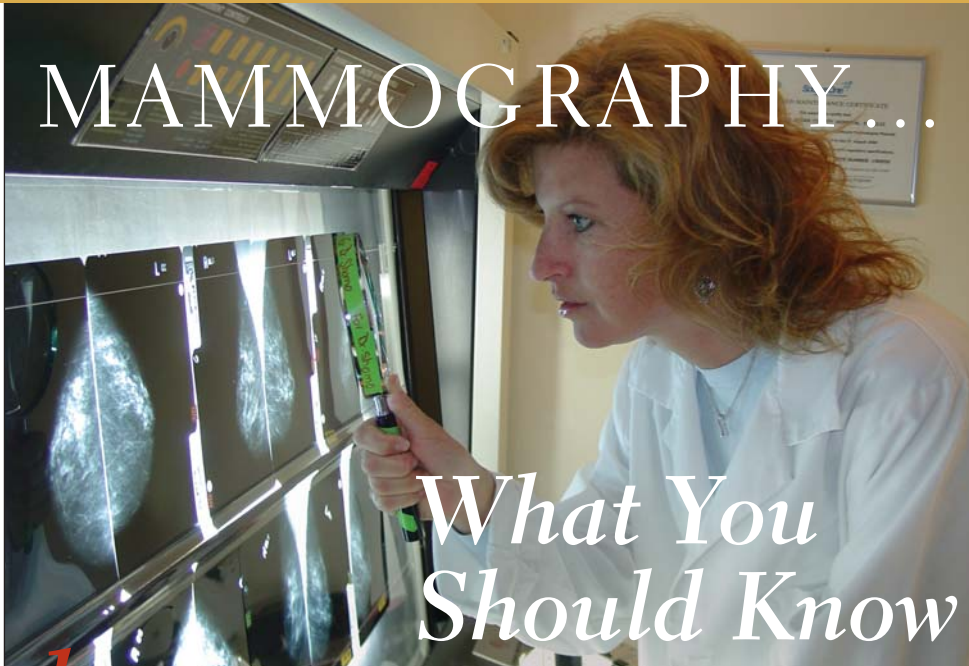


MAMMOGRAPHY...



What You Should Know

board-certified radiologist **Dr. Alicia Daniels** is in the reading room of the Women's Imaging Center at SOCH, carefully interpreting an image of a breast taken through the use of mammography. She draws on her years of experience and specialized training in mammography to meticulously analyze the image for any abnormalities that might indicate the presence of cancer.

"A mammogram can show changes in the breast before a patient or physician can feel them," Dr. Daniels explained. "An annual mammogram can lead to early detection of breast cancer, when there is the best chance for successful treatment."

When should a woman first have a mammogram? The United States Department of Health and Human Services, the American Cancer Society, the American Medical Association and the

American College of Radiology all recommend screening mammography every year for women, beginning at the age of 40.

"Women with breast cancer or those who have a family history of the disease should speak to their physician about whether they should begin screening before the age of 40," Dr. Daniels added.

According to Dr. Daniels, a mammogram works by taking an x-ray image of the breast. Although a mammogram is relatively quick, she acknowledges there can be some slight discomfort as a result for the need for breast compression. Understanding this need, she feels, will help make the experience easier for women.

"Breast compression is necessary to even out any thickness so that all of the tissue can be visualized, and any small abnormalities won't be obscured by overlying breast tissue," she explained. "A woman might feel some pressure during the study, but it only lasts a couple of seconds."

Dr. Daniels recommends that women do not wear any deodorant, talcum powder or lotion under their arms or on their breasts on the day of their mammogram, as these can appear on the image as calcium spots. She also suggests that women obtain prior mammograms and make them available to the radiologist at the time of the current exam.

"Women also question the difference between a screening mammogram and a diagnostic mammogram," said Dr. Daniels. "While a screening is performed each year

◀ *Board-certified SOCH radiologist Dr. Alicia Daniels draws on her years of experience and specialized training in mammography to analyze the image for any abnormalities.*

and looks for any changes, the diagnostic mammogram is used to evaluate a patient with abnormal findings, such as a breast lump that was found by the woman or her doctor."

Following the mammogram, the images are interpreted by one of SOCH's board-certified radiologists. "In addition to painstakingly examining the image of the breast, as well as comparing the image with prior mammograms taken of the patient, the radiologists also use the R2 Computer Aided Detection technology," said Dr. Daniels. "This is a computer program that is designed to aid in the identification of suspicious areas on the mammogram. The system will mark abnormalities, alerting the radiologist to take a closer examination of the area. While this system is beneficial, it may not be able to differentiate between a tumor, and an area of tissue density or a calcium deposit, that's where the expertise of the radiologist comes into play."

Indeed, Dr. Daniels has extensive experience interpreting mammograms. She earned her medical degree from Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University. She completed a diagnostic radiology residency at Albert Einstein Medical Center, which included a mini-fellowship in women's imaging.

"If a mammogram detects an abnormality, in some cases the radiologist will recommend a biopsy to determine if the suspicious lesion is cancerous," said Dr. Daniels, who performs minimally invasive ultrasound breast biopsy and stereotactic breast biopsy to diagnose breast disease.

Mammography is available in the beautifully appointed Women's Imaging Center, located on the first floor of SOCH, and at the SOCH Centers for Health in Forked River and Little Egg Harbor.

Breast Cancer Screening Guidelines:

- **Breast Self Exam:**
Monthly starting at age 20
- **Clinical Breast Exam by a Healthcare Provider:**
Every three years for women 20-39, every year for women 40 and older
- **Mammogram:**
Every year starting at age 40



To schedule an appointment, call **SOCHConnect**, at 609-978-3400.