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## SCANXIETY: IS THIS A REAL THING?

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“Scanxiety,” or scan-related anxiety, is a term some people use to describe the anxiety that can happen before and during an imaging scan, such as a mammogram.

So if your mind floods with fears or your hands get damp with sweat at the thought of getting a mammogram, remember you’re not alone. Many women report feelings of anxiety when it comes to mammography. Some women fear the pain associated with mammograms. Others are worried about radiation exposure. And for many it’s the fear of what the mammogram might find. All of those concerns are perfectly normal, and there are ways to help you manage the anxiety.

### Knowing the Facts Can Ease Fear.

**Mammograms hurt.** Some women may feel pain during a mammogram and others may not. If you experience pain during a mammogram or if you are sensitive to pressure, ask the technician to try and find positions that are more comfortable for you.

**Radiation exposure is unsafe.** Modern-day mammography only involves a tiny amount of radiation — even less than a standard chest X-ray. In fact, an airplane ride exposes you to more radiation than a mammogram.

**It takes too long.** Mammography is a fast procedure (about 20 minutes). To relieve the anxiety of waiting for results, try to go to a center that will give you results before you leave.

### Reduce Your Anxiety By Taking Control

Sometimes the facts aren’t enough. If scan-related anxiety persists, it’s okay. It happens. Keep that appointment, and try some of these strategies to manage your scanxiety.

- Talk openly with your doctor about any fears and the next steps you can take if the results are abnormal.
- Avoid getting a mammogram during times of breast tenderness, such as before your period.
- Stay away from deodorants, perfume, oils, or talc. These products interfere with clear mammogram results.
- Take a friend who makes you laugh.
- Listen to relaxing music or watch something funny on your smart phone or other device.
- Schedule a fun activity or a reward right after your mammogram.
- If your center does not provide immediate results, try to plan fun and distracting activities in the day or two after your mammogram.
- If you find that none of these tips are helping, speak with your doctor about medication.
- If anxious feelings become overwhelming, seek extra support from a counselor.

\*Remember... Don’t postpone your mammogram. Mammograms can save your life — make an appointment with your doctor today.

**Mammograms save lives.**