



## Digital Mammograms Break Through the Clutter

**E**very three minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the U.S. The sooner it's detected, the better able she is to fight it. Enter digital mammography, the latest diagnostic technology available to spot the most subtle signs of early breast cancer.



**Gary Davidson, MD**, Leavey Cancer Center Medical Director, and Radiation Oncologist **Afshin Safa, MD**, use the most advanced technologies to help women fight breast cancer (l-r).

"The **Carole Pump Women's Center** at Northridge Hospital Medical Center utilizes digital mammography—an advanced imaging procedure, which has achieved a 71 percent breast preservation rate as compared to the national average of 57 percent," says **Gary Davidson, MD**, Leavey Cancer Center Medical Director. In fact, a recent American Board of Radiology study proved that digital mammography is 15 to 28 percent more effective at detecting breast tumors as compared to conventional film-based mammography.

Consider **Duong Rich's** story—she had a digital mammogram at the Women's Center, which revealed a mass in her right breast. A biopsy, performed by **Marie McCombs, MD**, Medical Director of Women's Imaging, determined that Duong had stage one breast cancer—the earliest stage detectable.

"Digital (computerized) mammography enhances viewing options by allowing physicians to zoom-in and change the contrast of breast images. It can also detect microcalcifications—similar to revealing a grain of salt in a ball of clay," describes Dr. McCombs. "It surpasses



**Duong Rich** of Sherman Oaks had a digital mammogram that helped **Marie McCombs, MD**, Medical Director of Women's Imaging, to quickly and accurately identify a breast tumor (l-r).

conventional film-based systems because it results in less exposure to X-rays, significantly improves patient comfort and shortens examination times (about 10 to 15 minutes)."

Since Duong's cancer was caught early, she had a much higher chance of beating it. After undergoing surgery to remove the lump, she began Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) to destroy any lingering cancer cells. "IMRT delivers radiation therapy with pinpoint accuracy, and can take on the precise size and shape of the cancerous growth to preserve as much healthy, non-cancerous tissue as possible," explains Radiation Oncologist **Afshin Safa, MD**.

While Duong praises the Women's Center for offering only the best technology, she's equally grateful for the compassionate care she received. "At first, I was worried, but the doctors and nurses helped because they explained every procedure step-by-step, gave me helpful books and DVDs about breast cancer and even called me at home to offer emotional support."

Duong is so pleased with her care that she's considering volunteering as a coordinator for the Hospital's **Diagnosis to Recovery** or **Navigator Program**. Coordinators meet

one-on-one with cancer patients to discuss the management and recovery phases of their disease and provide patients with education and take-home videos. "The good people at the Women's Center have helped me fight breast cancer," she says. "And I want to do the same for other patients."

### Digital Mammography Patient Advantages

- Enhances viewing options so physicians can zoom-in and change the contrast of breast images.
- Detects microcalcifications (similar to revealing a grain of salt in a ball of clay).
- Surpasses conventional film-based systems because it results in less exposure to X-rays.
- Improves patient comfort with shorter examination times (about 10 to 15 minutes).

For more information about educational classes, support groups and workshops focusing on women's health, call the **Carole Pump Women's Center** at 818-700-5678 or visit [www.NorthridgeHospital.org/womenscenter](http://www.NorthridgeHospital.org/womenscenter).

## BREAST EXAM SCHEDULE

**20** the age to begin monthly self-exams and start scheduling annual clinical breast exams.

**40** the age to begin scheduling annual mammograms.

**10 years prior** is the age to begin scheduling annual mammograms from the age your mother or sister was diagnosed with breast cancer. For example, if she was diagnosed at age 44, begin scheduling your mammograms at age 34.

**SELF EXAMS**—The most common sign of breast cancer is a new lump or mass. Women may also notice:

- ✓ Swelling in part of the breast
- ✓ Skin irritation or dimpling
- ✓ Nipple pain or the nipple turned inward
- ✓ Red or scaly nipple or breast skin
- ✓ Nipple discharge (other than breast milk)
- ✓ A lump in the underarm area



## Women's Center Comprehensive Services:

- Breast Self-exam Demonstrations
- Digital Mammography
- Picture Archiving Communication System (PACS)
- Vacuum-assisted Breast Biopsy (a.k.a. Stereotactic Core Biopsy, which obtains a breast sample by inserting a special probe only once instead of several needle insertions like other procedures)
- Ultrasound-guided Biopsy
- MR-guided Breast Biopsy (performed in about one hour using only a topical anesthetic)
- 4D Ultrasounds (for breast imaging and interventional urology)
- Obstetric/Pelvic Ultrasounds
- Pelvic Sonograms
- Bone Densitometry (DEXA)
- MammoSite® (breast radiation treatment in five days)
- Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT)
- Perinatology Services
- Diagnosis to Recovery and Navigator Programs (coordinators guide patients through the management and recovery phases of cancer)

## FREE Gift Offer!

The **Carole Pump Women's Center** is offering a specially selected, FREE canvas tote bag to the first 300 women who schedule a mammogram during the month of October. We now offer digital mammography and appointments are scheduled every 10 minutes for added convenience. To ensure you remain in good health, you can also schedule your bone density screening at the same time.

To qualify for this free offering, you must be 40 years of age or older. Please ask your doctor for a referral.

For more information, call the **Carole Pump Women's Center** at 818-700-5678.



## Support Your Breasts: What Every Woman Needs to Know

Presented by **Marie McCombs, MD**, NHMC Women's Imaging Medical Director and National Spokeswoman on Breast Health for Johnson & Johnson; **Harold Marks, MD**, Surgeon, NHMC Physician Liaison, Breast Cancer Program; **Jan Baskin-Smith, RN**, Breast Health Specialist; **Roxanne Rahimi, RN, ONC**, Certified Oncology Nurse; **Randy Kaplan James, MS, DABR**, Physicist

Learn about new interventions to treat breast cancer, screening with MRI, risk factors, life after mastectomy and how to tell if breast cancer is in your family tree.

**Monday, October 13**

**9 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**5th Floor Penthouse Auditorium (lunch will be served)**

