

# Mammography during pregnancy and breastfeeding (breast radiology)

## Information for patients

This sheet aims to provide you with information if you are pregnant or breastfeeding at the time of your mammography (X-ray) screening examination. If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the team caring for you.

You have been invited for a breast screening mammography appointment. Regular breast screening is one of the best ways to spot a cancer that is too small to feel or see.

Women with a high-risk family history of breast cancer continue to be at high risk during pregnancy.

Mammography is an imaging method that uses X-rays, a type of ionising radiation, to create an image of the breast. The x-rays interact with the different tissues of the breast they pass through to form a shadow image. Other imaging methods are not suitable for either breast screening or for breast screening while pregnant or breastfeeding.

### **Risk to the foetus**

There is negligible radiation risk to the foetus from mammography.

It is therefore safe for your baby for you to proceed with your mammography examination.

Shielding is not needed to protect the abdomen.

### **Effect on imaging**

During pregnancy and breastfeeding, there are changes in the breast tissue that can affect breast imaging. This means that:

- the effectiveness of mammography may be reduced,
- the radiation dose to the breasts may increase, but this will be acceptable as it is still a low dose examination.

It is recommended that you breastfeed or express milk before the examination if you can.

If you decide not to go ahead with the examination at this time then we advise you to continue breast screening either after your baby is born or, if you are or will be breastfeeding, 3 months

after you stop breastfeeding. Please contact the department at that time to book your appointment.

## For more general information, please visit

- [Protocols for the surveillance of women at higher risk of developing breast cancer \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [NHS breast screening: helping you decide \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [Patient dose information: guidance \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [X-ray \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- [Medical radiation: uses, dose measurements and safety advice \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## Useful contacts

If you have any further questions please email the department at [kch-tr.familyhistoryandincreasedrisk@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.familyhistoryandincreasedrisk@nhs.net)

## Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit [www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk).

## Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: [kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net)

PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: 01689 863252

Email: [kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net)

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email [kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net)