



Imaging Update

Diagnostic Mammography v BreastScreen

Unsure when to send your patient for a Diagnostic Mammogram or to BreastScreen? Let us explain the difference and make it easier for you to decide just what is best for your patient.

Diagnostic Mammography

A diagnostic mammogram should be performed if there is a reason to suspect the presence of malignancy. Diagnostic mammography can attract a Medicare rebate with patients who have:

- The past occurrence of breast malignancy in the patient or members of the patients family
- Symptoms or indications of malignancy found on an examination of the patient by a medical practitioner

Depending on the age of the patient and findings from the mammogram, other imaging procedures such as breast ultrasound, biopsy and MRI may be utilised.

It is important that a request for diagnostic mammography must contain clinical notes that detail why the referrer requires the mammogram for the patient. If there is no past or family history of breast cancer the clinical notes must include signs or symptoms, which raise concern in regard to malignancy.

Examples include:

- Previous history of breast cancer
- Family history of breast cancer

- Symptoms or indications of malignancy found on an examination of the patient. e.g.
 - Breast thickening or dimpling
 - Nipple change or discharge
 - Focal tenderness (including a diagram on the referral)
 - Focal lump
 - Possible lesion
 - Any other suggestion/finding that could represent or question malignancy as long as the doctor highlights this is making them concerned about underlying malignancy

BreastScreen

Screening mammograms are for patients from 40-70 years of age with no clinical breast symptom(s) and for monitoring benign breast conditions. Patients can access this service at BreastScreen by calling 132 050. This is a free service supported by Government funding and a written referral is not necessary.

Regional Imaging provides screening mammograms, however, there will be an out of pocket cost to the patient as there is no Medicare rebate for this service. Privately referred screening mammography allows ultrasound to be undertaken on the day of the examination where required which provides a more complete assessment at a single visit.

MEDICARE REBATE GUIDE

Examination	Indications	Medicare Rebate
Screening Mammogram	Asymptomatic Women	No
Diagnostic Mammogram	The patient has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past history of breast cancer • Family history of breast cancer • Symptoms or indications of malignancy found on an examination of the patient by a medical practitioner 	Yes
Ultrasound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where malignancy suspected • In young women (under 30) • In association with mammography 	Yes