



# Questions to ask your doctor about breast health

Ever felt your mind go blank the second you had a chance to ask questions at the doctor's office? You're not alone.

There's a lot going on during a doctor's visit and it can be easy to let the doctor (or nurse, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant) run the show. It's a good idea to prepare beforehand to make sure you get what you need from your appointment. Bringing a list of questions will help you remember everything you want to ask and keep the discussion focused on the issues that are most important to you.

## What if my doctor's too busy?

It may help to mention at the start of your appointment that you have some questions and let your doctor decide whether to answer them right away or at the end of the appointment. If you get the sense that your doctor doesn't have time for your questions, it may be time [to find a new doctor](#). It's your life and your health, and you deserve a doctor who listens and takes you seriously.

## Questions to ask your doctor

Below are some questions related to breast health to get your list started. Taking a little time to get familiar with [breast cancer risk factors](#) can also help you have an informed conversation with your doctor. Choose questions from this list that apply to your individual situation, then add questions you have about other topics.

## Questions for your next doctor's visit

- What [breast cancer screening tests](#) do you recommend for me? Would I benefit from a mammogram or clinical breast exam?
- What are the risks and benefits of breast cancer screening?
- Am I at higher risk of breast cancer? If so, do I need special screening tests or do I need to be screened more often? Do you have everything you need to estimate my risk?

## If your doctor recommends screening:

- How often should I be screened?
- Which screening tests do you recommend?
- If a problem is found, what will we do next?

**If your doctor doesn't recommend mammograms at this point and you're under age 40:**

- When should I start getting mammograms?

**If your doctor doesn't recommend mammograms at this point and you're in your 40s:**

- Can we discuss the benefits and risks of mammography for me?

## Questions for when your doctor has recommended getting a mammogram

- Why do you suggest I have this test? How accurate is it?
- What should I do to [prepare for my mammogram](#)?
- How often should I get a mammogram?
- Where should I go for my mammogram given my insurance/financial situation?
- Is my mammogram scheduled at an FDA-certified mammography center? (To check for yourself, [visit the FDA's database](#).)
- (If you have a physical disability) Can you refer me to an accessible mammography center that can accommodate my needs?
- Does the radiologist specialize in mammography, or can you refer me to one who does?

## Questions for your technologist when you get your mammogram

- How long will the mammogram take?
- When and how will I get my results?

## Questions for a few more breast health scenarios

**If your doctor doesn't perform a clinical breast exam during your appointment:**

- Would you please perform a clinical breast exam during our appointment today?

**If you're pregnant or breastfeeding:**

- When and what type of breast health screening should I get?

**If you have breast implants:**

- Can you refer me to a mammography center with experience doing mammograms for women with breast implants?

Want even more questions? Susan G. Komen® has [downloadable question cards in English and Spanish about 14 different topics](#) related to breast health.

## Questions your doctor may ask you

Another great way to prepare for your appointment is to have answers ready for likely questions from your doctor. Here are some questions your doctor might ask to assess your risk of breast cancer and support your breast health.

- Let's talk about your [family health history](#). Do you know of any relatives on your mother's or your father's side who have had cancer? If so, which family member, what type of cancer, and when were they diagnosed?
- How old were you when you got your first period?
- When was your last period?
- Have you noticed any changes in your breasts?
- How often do you exercise?
- How much alcohol do you consume in a week?
- What is your diet like? Do you eat plenty of fruits and vegetables?
- Have you had any children? If so how many children do you have and how old were you when you had them?
- Did you breastfeed? If so, how long did you breastfeed each child?
- If you've started getting mammograms, when was your last mammogram? Where was it done?

Being honest and proactive with your doctor is one of the best things you can do for your breast health. If you're not sure how to go about that, [here are some tips for being your own best advocate](#).



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