

# What’s Important to Women During Their Mammogram: Patients Speak Out

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## Introduction

Approximately 39 million mammography procedures are performed in the United States each year.<sup>1</sup> During these procedures, mammographers strive to keep patients relaxed and comfortable while ensuring good image quality, maximizing tissue acquisition and minimizing the occurrence of skin tears. Patients who are more relaxed are easier to position, whereas skin tears can result in an unfavorable patient experience.<sup>2</sup>

## Patient Survey

In December 2021, a blind, random, anonymous survey<sup>3</sup> was conducted to explore the importance of several mammography-related factors and better understand patients’ perceptions of the Bella Blankets® protective coverlet for the receptor plate. Survey respondents were as follows:

- Women across the United States who had a mammogram within the last five years
- Total of 640 responses included in the analysis

*“Bella Blankets would be helpful in not only achieving maximum comfort for patients but more importantly helping obtain a good position of the breast tissue.”*

## Key Discoveries

Factors Considered “Very Important” by Majority of Survey Respondents	Responses About Bella Blankets	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Getting more breast tissue in the image (85%)</li><li>• Preventing a skin tear (77%)</li><li>• Protecting the skin from chemical cleaners (72%)</li><li>• Having a sanitary barrier between the breast and the equipment (71%)</li><li>• Having a more comfortable mammogram (68%)</li></ul>	Of the survey respondents that had Bella Blankets placed on the imaging equipment during their mammogram, <b>84% said it made them feel more cared for by their breast imaging center.</b>	Of the survey respondents that had Bella Blankets placed on the imaging equipment during their mammogram, <b>66% said it influences their decision to return to the same breast imaging center.</b>

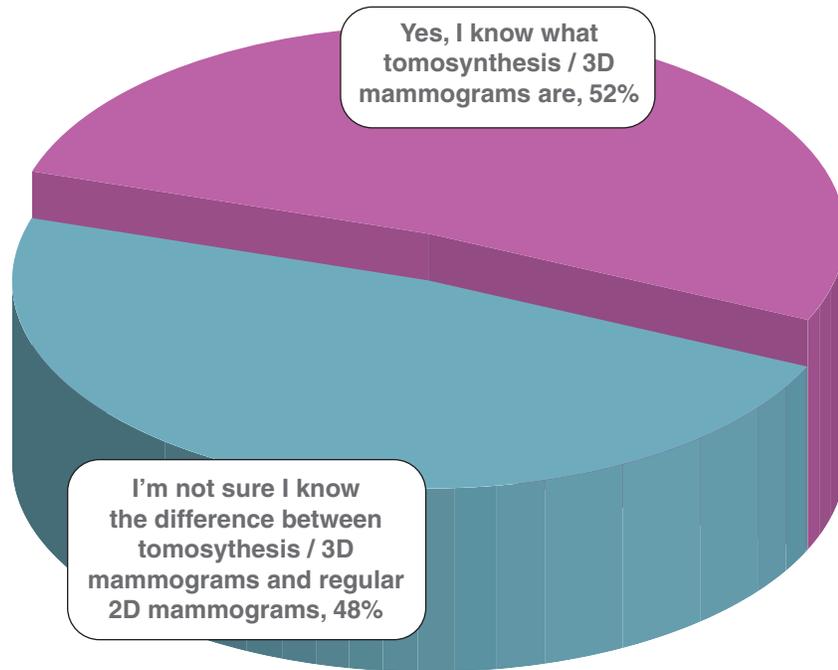
## What Patients Understand About Mammography Basics

To uncover what patients understand about two basic yet important concepts in mammography: breast density and digital breast tomosynthesis (DBT) versus conventional 2D full field digital mammography (FFDM), the survey opened with the following two questions.

### ***DBT vs FFDM***

The survey showed an approximately even split between those who knew what tomosynthesis/3D mammograms are (52%) and those who didn't know the difference between DBT and FFDM (48%).

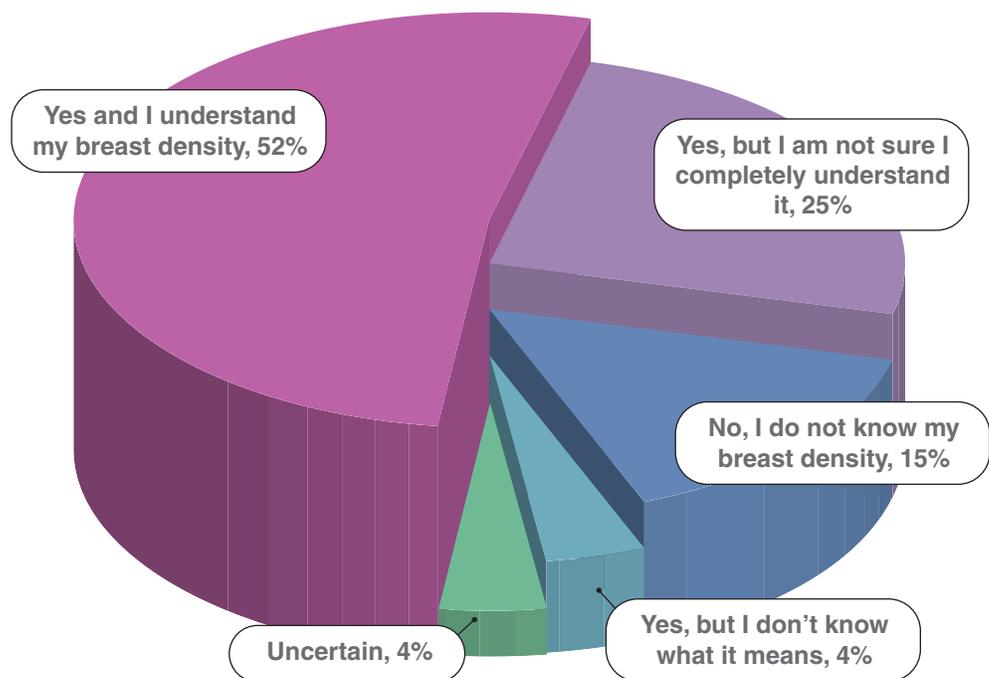
Do you know what tomosynthesis/3D mammograms are?



### ***Awareness and Understanding of Breast Density***

A slight majority of women (52%) said they have been informed about their breast density and understand what it means, while 25% have been informed but don't completely understand it.

Have you been told about your breast density by your breast imaging center or OB/GYN?

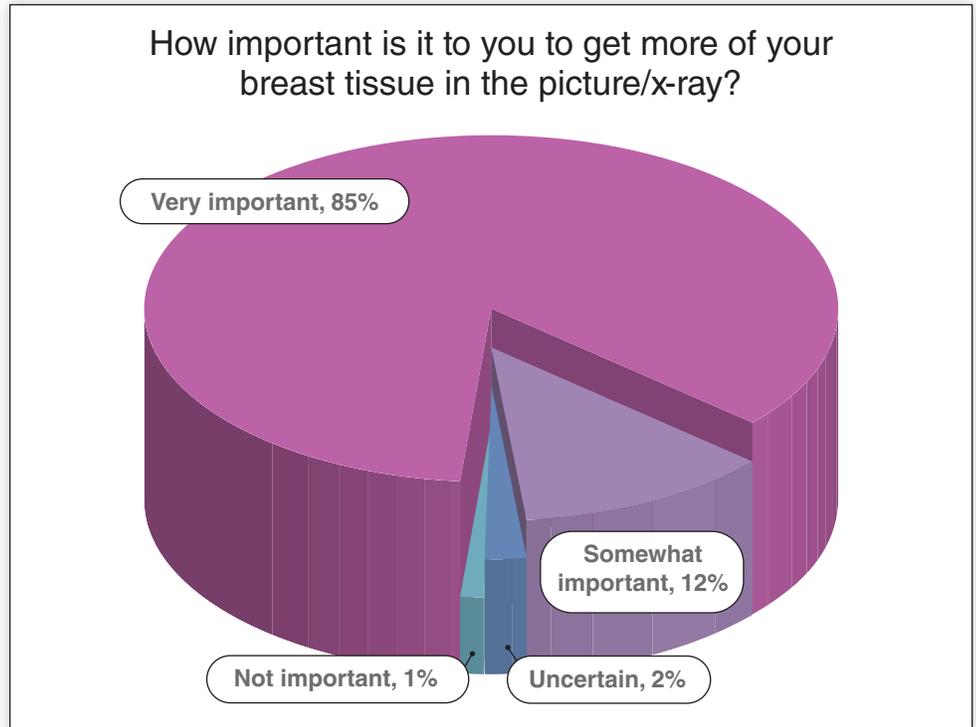


## Patients' Perceptions of Six Key Aspects of a Mammogram

The following questions explored the importance of six key aspects of a mammogram: tissue acquisition, preventing skin tears, protecting the skin from cleaning solutions, having a sanitary barrier, having a comfortable mammogram, and removing the chilly feeling from the equipment.

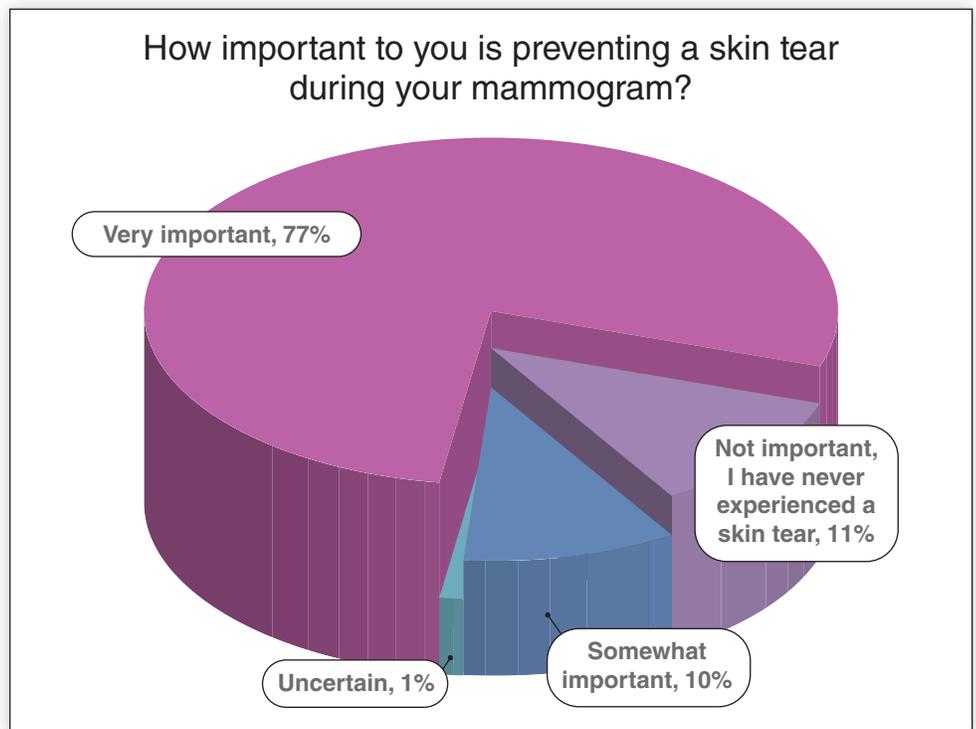
### **Tissue Acquisition**

Getting more breast tissue was ranked "Very Important" by 85% of survey respondents.



### **Preventing Skin Tears**

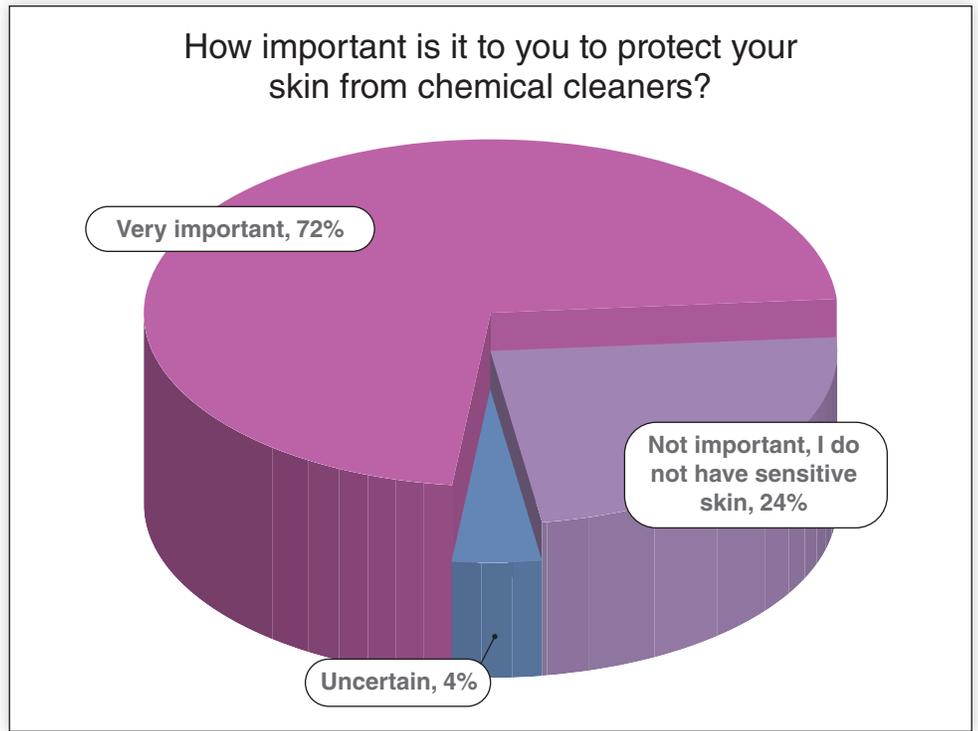
Preventing a skin tear was ranked "Very Important" by 77% of survey respondents.



*“ I think this product would help prevent skin tears under my breast as the tissue is very fragile from breakouts and yeast infections.”*

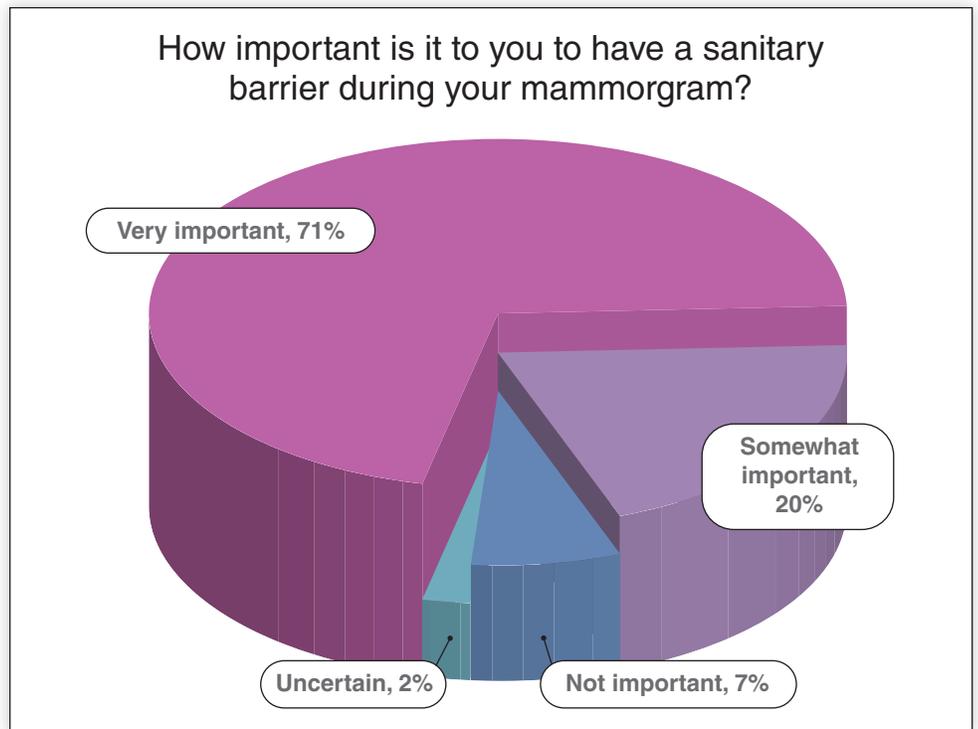
**Protecting the Skin from Chemical Cleaners**

Protecting the skin from chemical cleaners was ranked “Very Important” by 72% of survey respondents.



**Sanitary Barrier**

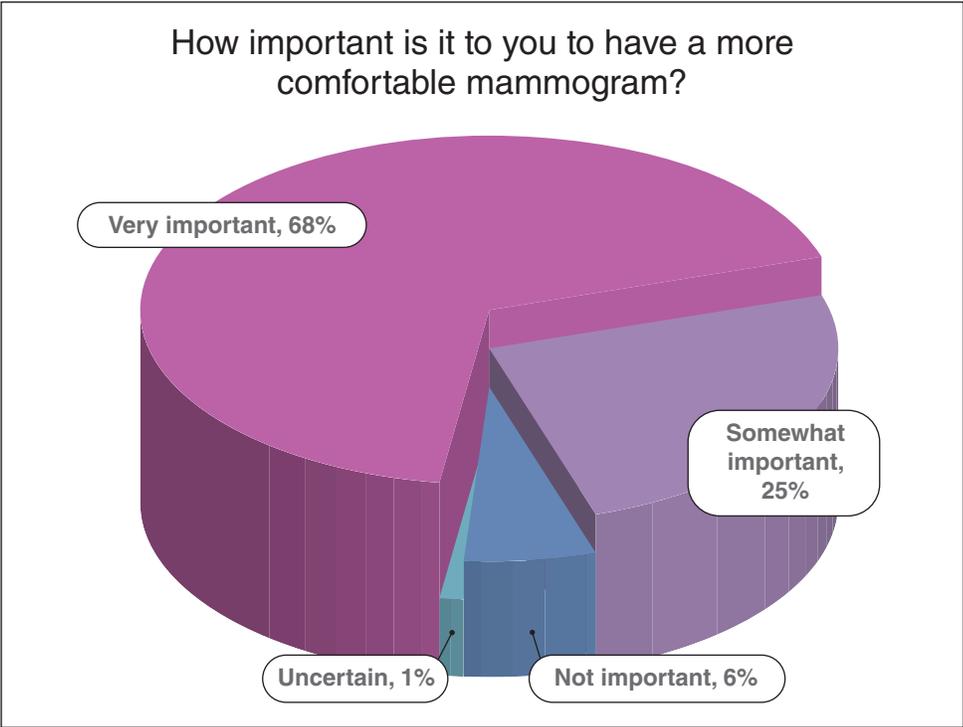
Having a sanitary barrier between the breast and the equipment was ranked “Very Important” by 71% of survey respondents.



*“ I believe Bella Blankets® would be beneficial to help prevent exposure to germs and chemicals, and would provide extra comfort for what could be a very uncomfortable experience.”*

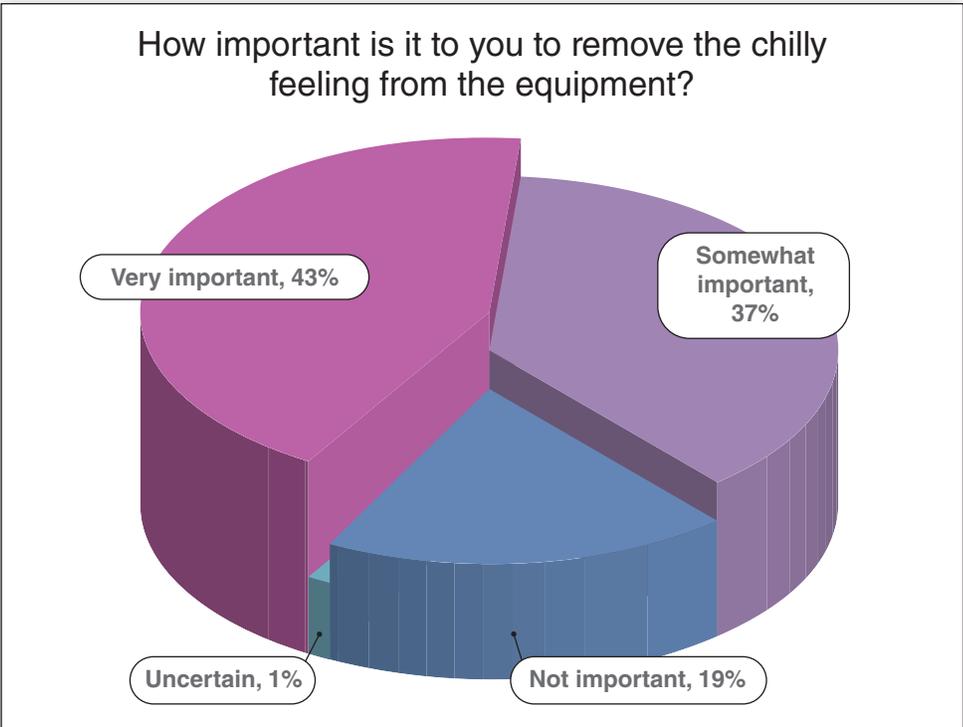
**More Comfortable Mammograms**

Having a more comfortable mammogram was ranked “Very Important” by 68% of survey respondents.



**Removing the Chilly Feeling**

Removing the chilly feeling from the mammography equipment was ranked “Very Important” by 43% of survey respondents.



*“ I don’t like having the exams done but if there are things such as the Bella Blankets® that would help make it more comfortable, I would be more willing to make the regular appointments that come up. ”*

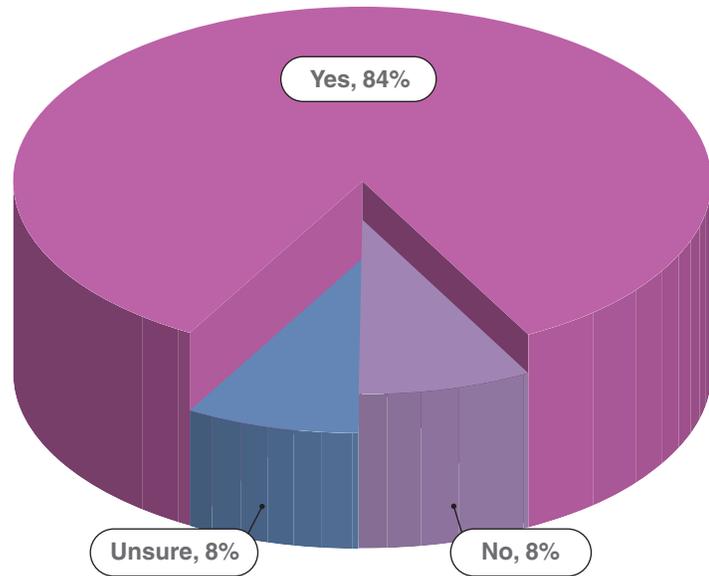
## Patients Share Their Thoughts About Bella Blankets®

A total of 50 survey respondents, or approximately 8% of all respondents, said Bella Blankets was used during their mammogram. The following questions were asked specifically of those women who had experienced Bella Blankets.

### ***Using Bella Blankets Makes Women Feel More Cared For***

An overwhelming majority of women (84%) said the use of Bella Blankets makes them feel more cared for by their breast imaging center.

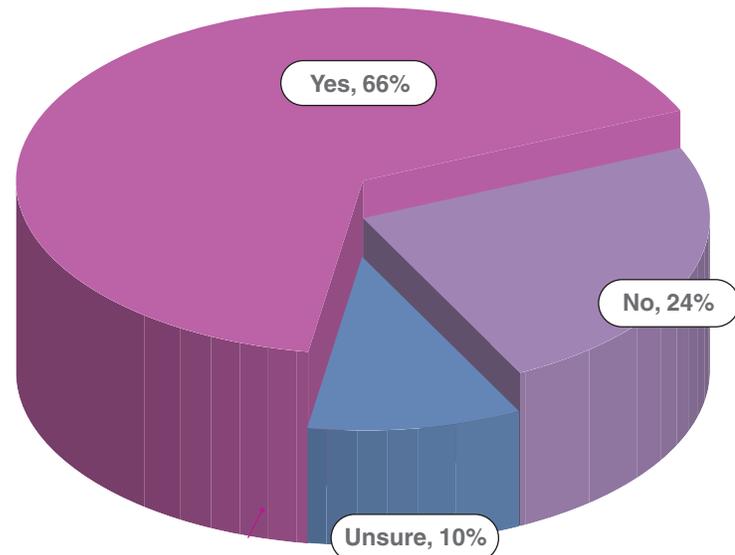
Did the use of Bella Blankets make you feel more cared for by your breast imaging center?



### ***Bella Blankets Positively Influences Return to Imaging Center***

A majority of women (66%) said the use of Bella Blankets influences their decision to return to the same breast imaging center.

Does the use of Bella Blankets influence your decision to return to the same breast imaging center?



*“ There is a lot of anxiety endured with a mammogram appointment. Anything to reduce stress and increase comfort is appreciated. ”*

## Discussion

The findings from this survey show women have strong feelings about many aspects of their mammogram.

While image quality and getting the best exam possible are essential, other factors such as comfort, safety and sanitary measures are also important.

Respondents placed a high degree of importance on the benefits of Bella Blankets®: getting more breast tissue, preventing skin tears, helping prevent exposure to residue from cleaning solutions, having a sanitary barrier between the breast and the imaging equipment, having a more comfortable mammogram, and removing the chilly feeling from the equipment. Numerous respondents cited concerns over coming in contact with cleaning solutions used on the equipment, and thus having a sanitary barrier was shown to be a noteworthy benefit, both for minimizing exposure to residue from cleaning solutions as well as providing extra protection between patients.

Patients who had used Bella Blankets said it makes them feel cared for and influences their return to the same imaging

center. Similarly, patients who had not used Bella Blankets expressed an appreciation for its wide range of benefits, with some even saying it might lessen their propensity to avoid mammograms.

The survey also revealed an opportunity for better education around the differences between DBT and FFDM. When asked about breast density, only a slight majority of respondents said they have been told about their breast density and understand what it means. Thus, better education about breast density may also be helpful for patients.

## Conclusions

Bella Blankets not only help mammographers acquire more breast tissue during imaging but also bring many other benefits that patients appreciate and value. Patients' positive impressions of Bella Blankets may help drive new and/or continued business to breast imaging centers who have adopted their consistent use.



**Bella Blankets®** protective coverlets by Beekley Medical® help increase tissue acquisition, immobilize hard to position breasts, prevent breasts from sticking to the receptor plate, shield cuts or infections in the inframammary fold, and act as a sanitary barrier that can help patients feel more at ease.



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## References:

1. FDA, MQSA National Statistics, retrieved from <https://www.fda.gov/radiation-emitting-products/mqsa-insights/mqsa-national-statistics>.
  2. Improving the Mammography Experience: Bella Blankets® Help Eliminate Skin Tears, Beekley Medical, 2018.
  3. Online survey conducted December 2021 via Survey Monkey®.
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