

Mammography During COVID-19: Patient Stories

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In October 2020, a blind, random, anonymous survey¹ was administered to women across the United States to assess their perceptions about getting a mammogram during the COVID-19 pandemic. Key findings from the survey include the importance of allowing patients to see the equipment being sanitized in front of them, the value of educating patients on the importance of screening mammograms even during a pandemic, and that a single-use protective coverlet for the mammography machine receptor plate would make patients feel more at ease and more apt to get their mammogram.²

The patient stories³ here provide a more in-depth view of the survey responses. These 10 stories represent a cross-section of women from the survey, five of whom had a mammogram during the pandemic and five who did not.

Patient Story #1

53 year old from Texas

My mammogram was in the very early months of the pandemic. My breast center closed the waiting area and had people wait in their car for their appointment. Although I was happy to see that all equipment was cleaned thoroughly and I was relieved to get my mammogram, I was more anxious and nervous than I usually am. I believe it's important to get mammograms, even during a pandemic. If there was a protective coverlet on the mammography machine, I would feel more at ease and would be more apt to go in for my mammogram.

Patient Story #2

60 year old from Pennsylvania

I'm scheduled for a mammogram next week. It is unconscionable to suggest women should postpone a test that can possibly catch this cancer before it becomes aggressive. A protective coverlet for the mammography machine is used and I feel safe.

Patient Story #3

72 year old from Oregon

My mammogram was in the middle of the summer. I made an appointment as soon as the center opened up again after being shut down. I knew they would take every precaution to keep me safe. When I came in for my mammogram, I was taken directly to the exam room from the outer office rather than going to a waiting room. Also, there was no changing room, I changed into my gown in the exam room. I saw the technician wipe down the machine in front of me. I felt very safe!

Patient Story #4

42 year old from Ohio

My breast center rescheduled my mammogram due to COVID-19 restrictions. I'm afraid our area will be back in the "hot zone" status before it's time for my mammogram, which could cause even more delays. I understand safety is a priority but it's unfortunate. Forgoing mammograms, pap tests, etc, is in my opinion as dangerous as COVID-19. These routine tests must be done; mammograms are an important part of women's health care. My facility uses a partial protective covering on the machine while the rest is wiped down in front of you with some type of cleanser that's safe for skin. Our hospitals and clinics are great, and I feel secure.

Patient Story #5

70 year old from Pennsylvania

My mammogram was in the late summer. Patients and staff wore masks, the appointments were spaced out, and I registered at the desk rather than the kiosk. Everyone was socially distanced except for what was required for the exam. There was no difference in how I felt compared to my last mammogram. Overall I think my appointment was handled very well. Having a protective coverlet on the mammography machine would make me feel more at ease.

Patient Story #6

57 year old from New York

I don't think there is anything to make me feel safe, it is scary just being so close to someone not knowing if they have COVID. However, having a protective coverlet on the mammography machine would make me feel more at ease and more apt to go in for my mammogram.

Patient Story #7

74 year old from Kentucky

I had my mammogram during the late summer. The patients distanced from one another and wore masks. There was hardly any wait time. I didn't feel that different about getting my mammogram, I felt very safe. A protective coverlet was on the mammography machine. I would not put off having a mammogram because of COVID-19.

Patient Story #8

66 year old from Oregon

I've not yet had my mammogram but I do not plan on postponing. It would make me feel safer knowing the technician will be wearing a mask, knowing the machine has been sanitized, and having an opportunity to wipe down my breasts after the procedure. I would feel more at ease and would be more apt to go in for my mammogram if a protective coverlet was on the machine.

Patient Story #9

50 year old from Colorado

I had my mammogram in the early spring of 2020. When I arrived, hospital security checked my temperature and asked screening questions about any COVID-related symptoms, travel and exposure. People wore masks, used hand sanitizer, and socially distanced. The chairs in the waiting room were spread out and the room was not full. I didn't feel that different about getting my mammogram this time compared to my last one, and the hospital did an excellent job using PPE.

Patient Story #10

49 year old from Georgia

To me, it is more important to get a mammogram than to worry about COVID since I have a very strong family history of breast cancer. I will not postpone my mammogram. Having a protective coverlet on the machine would make me feel more at ease, and I would feel safer if everyone wears a mask.

Bella Blankets® protective coverlets 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.



¹ Online survey conducted October 8-9, 2020 via Survey Monkey®.

² Mammography During COVID-19: How to Keep Patients From Distancing From Their Mammogram, 2020, Beekley Corporation.

³ Patient stories created based on responses to multiple choice and open-ended survey questions.