Asymmetry

Asymmetry is a mammographic finding. When the mammogram is reviewed and an area of density is seen in one breast and not the other, this is termed asymmetry. Our breasts are like our hands; they should look and feel similar. They should also have the same tissue pattern on a mammogram. This means that your breasts are symmetrical. If there is an area in one breast that does not appear in the opposite breast, it is asymmetrical. Asymmetric densities occur in about 5-10% of women, and need to be further evaluated with additional mammography films and sometimes ultrasound.

Asymmetries can also occur due to superimposed tissues on the mammogram. Sometimes special compression views of the area can spread out the tissue and resolve these areas of asymmetry. Ultrasound may also be used for further evaluation. These compression views can also confirm and characterize an underlying abnormality such as a cyst or solid mass.

When no definite underlying abnormality is seen, the following may be recommended:

1. Short-term follow-up mammogram on the side showing the asymmetry, typically in four months, which is followed with an annual bilateral mammogram scheduled eight months later.

2. Practice monthly breast self-examinations

3. Call and report changes to your doctor.