

# A More Comfortable Mammogram

**S**tudies have proven that beginning screening mammograms at age 40 saves the greatest number of lives. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that in 2015, only 65.3% of women age 40 and over had a mammogram within the past two years. Discomfort, fear, and anxiety can all contribute to a woman's hesitation in scheduling her yearly screening.

A mammogram appointment will never rival a visit to the spa, but that doesn't mean it can't be a more pleasant experience. To that end, Kettering Health Network now offers mammography units with special features designed to reduce anxiety and increase comfort. These features, along with 3D imaging technology, are helping to

remove the barriers women sometimes face when it comes time to schedule their yearly mammogram.

## Improving the sensory experience

Each new mammography unit comes with a sensory suite that includes a 48-inch flat panel monitor. During a mammogram, women have the option to watch a series of images from nature and listen to relaxing music. A scent diffuser infuses with the air with a calming fragrance. "Standing in an exam room with your breast in compression can cause anxiety in some women," says Sally Grady, director of Kettering Breast Evaluation Centers (KBEC). "By stimulating two or more senses si-

multaneously, we can distract patients from the perceived discomfort, pain, and anxiety of a mammogram."

Additional features also improve comfort. All components of the imaging unit that come into contact with the patient's breasts have gentle, rounded corners. The system features comfortable armrests that relax the pectoral muscles to simplify positioning and compression. The new units also allow women to use a remote control device to adjust the degree of compression with guidance from the technologist, if they wish. Studies actually show that many women will apply more compression themselves than they would allow a technologist to apply.

## Extra support for women with dense breasts

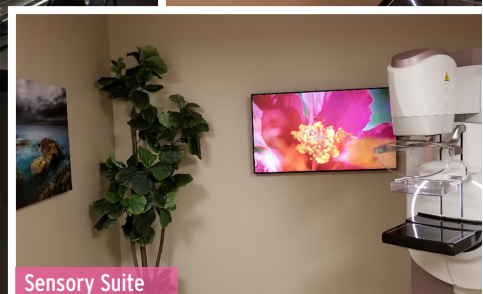
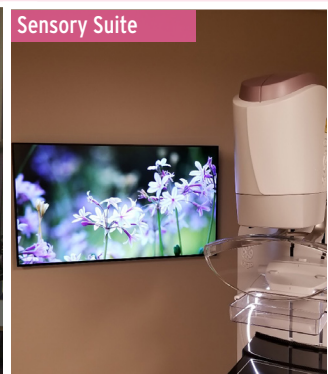
Three-dimensional mammography is particularly important for women with dense breasts. (dense breasts have relatively high amounts of glandular tissue and fibrous connective tissue and relatively

low amounts of fatty tissue.) "There is emerging consensus that 3D technology detects breast cancer more accurately than 2D mammography," says Meghan Musser, DO, Kettering Health Network breast radiologist. Traditional, 2D images are flat, and breast tissue can be overlapping, making abnormalities harder to detect. Three-dimensional mammograms produce a layered image of the breast tissue that provides improved clarity and detail.

"We're developing tools to help women understand what their personal breast density level is, how that correlates to their breast cancer risk, and how to mitigate that risk," says Dr. Musser. "This could include using software that assigns a specific density level for each breast and creating educational materials—we hope to have those in place later this year."

To learn more about Kettering Breast Evaluation Centers or to schedule an appointment, visit [ketteringhealth.org/breasthealth](http://ketteringhealth.org/breasthealth)

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Traci Kuzminski  
Firefighter & Paramedic

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time for an annual mammogram.

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