

Can breastfeeding mothers get mammograms?

Yes, breastfeeding mothers can have mammograms.

Mothers asking this question may have two concerns:

1. Will the radiation affect my milk and harm my baby?
2. Is it possible to read the mammogram of a lactating breast?

X-rays do not affect mother's milk, so you can safely resume breastfeeding immediately after the mammogram. *In fact, according to the LLLI WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING, page 134, "Mammograms, x-rays and ultrasound tests will not interfere with breastfeeding."*

The second question has a longer answer. It is possible to read a mammogram of a lactating breast. Breasts that produce milk are called lactating breasts. Due to milk production, there is more dense tissue present in the lactating breast than in a non-lactating one. This normal density may make it harder to read the results. The amount of tissue in your breast depends on the frequency that your baby is breastfeeding. If breastfeeding occurs infrequently, there will be less milk and tissue so the mammogram would be easier to read. To help reduce the amount of milk prior to a mammogram, you could bring your baby and breastfeed immediately prior to the procedure. Finding a radiologist experienced in reading mammograms of lactating breasts would produce more reliable results.