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Finding Breast Cancer Early



Peter Apicella, MD
SRMC Chief Radiologist

Early detection of breast cancer can be lifesaving.

Salem Regional Medical Center (SRMC) offers a comprehensive range of advanced imaging services to help find and treat breast cancer at its earliest stage, when it's 99% curable.

► 3D Mammography

"SRMC's 3D mammography provides sharper images and can detect up to 40% more invasive cancers than a traditional 2D mammogram," said SRMC's Chief Radiologist Dr. Peter Apicella.

3-D mammography is among the best tools available to detect breast cancer early, before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms and when there are more treatment options available.

"This level of detail enhances the ability to quickly and accurately identify early cancers, especially in women with dense breasts and fibrocystic breast disease, where tumors are more difficult to find," Dr. Apicella explained.

Annual mammograms are recommended for most women starting at age 40. Those who are at high risk for breast cancer, such as women with a family history or genetic risk factors for the disease, should talk to their doctors about starting screening before age 40.

► High-Definition Breast Ultrasound

Ultrasound uses high-frequency sound waves to produce detailed images of breast tissue and may be recommended to follow up on suspicious areas seen on a mammogram.

"SRMC utilizes the latest high-definition ultrasound technology to help determine if a lump is a benign cyst filled with fluid or a solid tumor, which could be a cancerous or a noncancerous growth," Dr. Apicella said. "An ultrasound exam may also be performed in addition to mammography to help better detect tumors in women with very dense breast tissue."

►3T Breast MRI:

A breast MRI creates highly-detailed images of breast tissues and is sometimes performed along with a mammogram to screen for breast cancer in certain women who are at high risk for the disease.

“Breast MRI scans are performed on SRMC’s state-of-the-art 3T Open MRI, which has twice the strength and detail of older 1.5T MRI scanners. This allows for more accurate, early detection of cancers in the breast, lymph nodes and surrounding muscle. If cancer is present, a breast MRI can also help better determine the tumor’s size and location to guide treatment,” Dr. Apicella noted.

►Stereotactic Breast Biopsy:

If an abnormality is detected on a mammogram or other imaging test, a biopsy to remove a sample of breast tissue for testing may be done to diagnose or rule out cancer.

“SRMC performs breast biopsies using minimally-invasive techniques to reduce pain and discomfort, including stereotactic biopsies,” Dr. Apicella said. “During this non-surgical procedure, the radiologist uses specialized mammography to precisely locate and remove a tiny sample of suspicious breast tissue for examination. This type of biopsy requires little recovery time with no significant scarring to the breast.”

Dr. Apicella noted that SRMC offers the latest 3D breast biopsy able to sample suspicious areas half the size of a pea accurately to find even smaller cancers, which may not even need chemotherapy for treatment.

Nationally-Recognized Imaging

State-of-the-art medical imaging services at Salem Regional Medical Center are accredited by the American College of Radiology, assuring they are nationally-recognized for high quality and safety.

For more information about SRMC’s comprehensive breast imaging services, call 330-332-7413.

Two Mammography Locations

3D mammograms can be scheduled at SRMC’s main campus in Salem, 1995 East State St., and at the SRMC Imaging Center at Firestone Farms, 116 Carriage Drive in Columbiana.

Walk-in hours for screening mammograms are also available at SRMC’s Columbiana location from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, no appointment needed. To schedule a mammogram, call 330-332-7300.