

# New Cancer Screening Guidelines



## Mammograms/Breast Cancer

With the school year coming to a close and insurance deductibles slowly being met, more women are coming in to get caught up on their annual exams.

Questions still loom regarding all the controversy that arose over the holiday season when the US Preventative Services Task Force recommended against routine mammography screening for women in their 40's and recommended screening begin every two years between ages 50 - 74. All of this hit the press simultaneously with discussions on healthcare

reform, medicare revisions and budget cuts, causing many to believe the recommendations were based more on financial concerns than good clinical data.

Basically the recommendations against routine screening for women in their 40's was based on the fact that younger women with more dense breasts have more falsely positive mammograms leading to a higher number of possible procedures. These can then result in scar tissue which result in mammograms that may be more difficult to read in the future not to mention higher anxiety with more false positive mammograms. This coupled with the fact that younger women have a lower risk of breast cancer resulted in the USPSTF recommending against routine mammography in younger women.

However, ACOG (American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologist) continues to recommend routine mammography screening every two years for women between ages 40 - 50, and annually after age 50. The ACS (American Cancer Society) still recommends annual mammography screening for all women over 40.

So with 3 different recommendations, what do you do? The bottom line is we'll review your personal and family history and recommend a screening regimen that is right for you!

## Pap Smears/Cervical Cancer Screening

Below are the new ACOG guidelines for pap smears:

- \* Women should have their first screening pap smear at age 21 unless they have had previous abnormal result
- \* Women in their 20's can move their pap smears to every two years (with two previous consecutive normal pap smears)
- \* Women age 30 and older who have had three previous consecutive normal pap smears with negative HPV testing should have a pap smear every three years
- \* Women who have had a hysterectomy for non-cancerous reasons do not need a pap smear unless they have a cervix
- \* Women may cease having pap smears after age 65-70 so long as they have had normal pap smears for the last 10 years

