MAMMOGRAPHY SYSTEM BUYERS GUIDE

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The Mammography System Buyers Guidebook

This Mammography System Buyers Guidebook, developed by Amber Diagnostics, is designed to help you understand and address common concerns regarding Mammography systems before you make a big investment. This document contains all the information you need in regards to Mammography costs, parts, types, site planning, maintenance, and more. Our goal is to ensure you have a convenient reference at hand, giving you the knowledge and confidence to go forth in purchasing your Mammography system.

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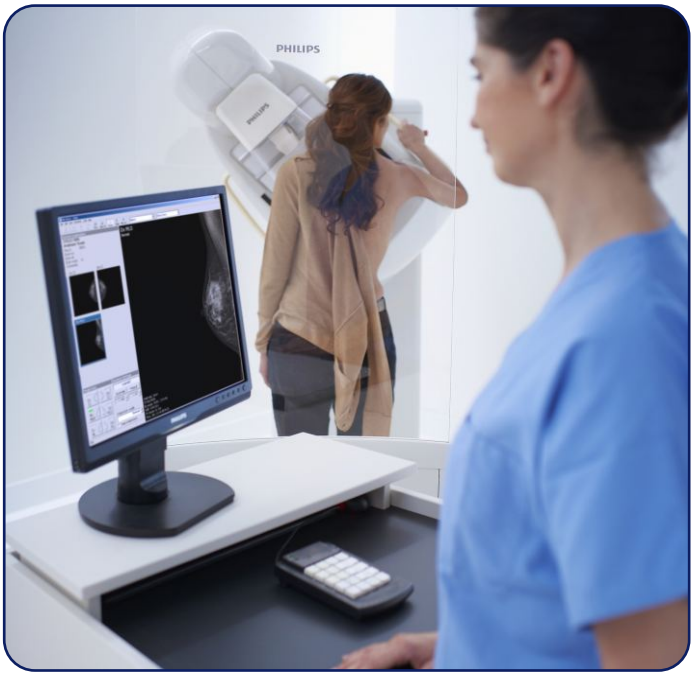
Mammography and Breast Cancer Overview

A mammogram by definition is an image obtained through the process of a mammography. A mammography in turn is defined as “A technique employing the usage of X- Rays to diagnose and locate tumors in the breasts.” Given the current statistics relating to breast cancer it is vital for women to get mammograms to see if they are at risk for breast cancer or in the initial stages.

The importance of the mammography procedure is made clear in the following statitistics:

- One in eight women in the US will develop an invasive form of breast cancer in her lifetime.
- In 2013, there are over 230,000 cases expected for invasive cases, while the expectation for non invasive cases is just under 65,000.
- The invasive diagnosis for men is expected to be over 2000 while the main statistic sees only one in 1000 men with the possibility of developing breast cancer.
- The expectation of death as a result of breast cancer is close to 40,000 by the end of 2013.
- Family history may actually double a woman's risk.
- It has been revealed that nearly 3 million women in the US have some history of breast cancer.



A mammography does not eradicate breast cancer but it can play a significant part in actually treating it. Having the procedure done with some frequency allows the patient the ability of:

- Knowing what the current situation is.
- Understanding what individual factors may serve as a deterrent to cancer.
- Knowing the increased risk that comes with greater age.
- Knowing the stage of a tumor.
- Understanding a correct manner of treatment for a tumor.

Here are some facts that are vital to understanding the importance of a mammography:

- The mammography, performed in time has helped reduce breast cancer mortality rates by nearly a third over a 23 year period.
- A 40 year old woman's breast cancer risk over ten years is 1 in 69
- One out of every six cancers occurs in women that are in a range between 40 and 49 years of age.
- 40% of the lives saved by mammography have been for women that are 40 and over.
- For every 1000 women screened, there are 5 cancers diagnosed.

It's vital for all women to take action and engage in regular breast cancer screenings, a tumor may never develop but then again a strong and invasive for of cancer may develop without expectation.

Mammography Procedure: Procedure and Risks

A mammography sounds like any other diagnostic imaging procedure. When you think about it you think of a dark room, a loud machine, and someone in a white coat telling you it's going to be okay. It's fair to ask what sort steps take place before, during and after the procedure and what are some of the risks.

So let's start with what's known:

- It's an X- Ray of the breast
- It helps detect tumors on the breast, if they are there.
- Locates abnormal areas and proves whether or not they are cancer
- The procedure has been used for over 30 years

Those are just some fairly common facts about mammography. The procedure itself is a little bit more complicated and requires more of an in depth explanation. First, there are two different types of procedures that are done and they are:

- **Screening Mammography**
- **Diagnostic Mammography**

A screening mammography is done in order to detect changes in the breasts of women that are not showing any common signs of cancer. The procedure involves two X- Rays of each breast. This particular test has the ability to detect a tumor that's not felt. If a woman doesn't feel a lump it doesn't mean that she doesn't have something to worry about.

A diagnostic mammography checks abnormalities found in a screening mammography. A big part of the diagnostic mammography deals with abnormalities that include pain, thickening of the nipples, undetected masses, even discharge. There is a difference in between the two is fairly easy to see.

A screening mammography works for the purpose of making sure that there's nothing wrong. The diagnostic mammography sees what's wrong and goes from there. The two can occasionally work off one another although it's not always the case. It's important for the patient to be informed as to what the types of mammography. It's vital for the physician to understand and properly explain the procedure from the before procedure protocol to the actual procedure itself.

Given the strong advocacy for breast cancer, most women understand the need for a mammography. If a woman is older than 25 and feels lumps, or some sort of unusual symptom, it's important to get that checked out. If a woman has first degree history she may be well served to get checked out once or twice per year.

A before the procedure list is always important and it should read like this:

- A thorough explanation that will include answering any questions from the patient.
- Signing required consent forms.
- Notifying the doctor of pregnancy, implants, breast-feeding or any general developments.
- Understanding do's and don'ts such as proper attire, avoiding use of powders, perfumes and ointments.
- Ensuring the exam is scheduled for two weeks after the start of menstruation.
- Any specifics stemming from concerns with regards to patient health.

The procedure itself is like any other diagnostic imaging procedure in that it has a list of sorts that's followed by the person performing it. Once the patient is in, the usual protocol calls for the removal of anything that may interfere with the procedure.

The following is a list of what is typically done during the exam:

- Remove all clothing from the waist up.
- Get the reliable hospital gown to wear.
- The patient will be asked to stand in front of a mammography machine and one breast will be placed on the X-ray plate. In order to position the breast for optimal imaging, the technologist may examine and/or palpate the breast before placing it on the plate. An adhesive marker may be applied to any moles, scars, or other spots that might interfere with the breast image.
- A separate flat plate is brought down in order to gently compress the breast against the X-Ray plate.
- The patient is asked to hold their breath during the procedure.
- Two pictures of each breast are taken at different angles.
- After the pictures are taken, the radiologist examines the film while asking you to wait.

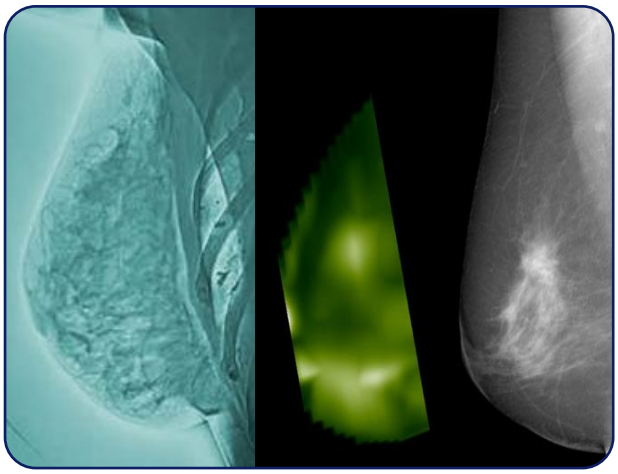
The procedure is known as slightly uncomfortable due to how the breast is manipulated in order to take the picture itself. After a 30 to 45 minute wait the patient will know what the next steps are, if there's something to worry about or not.

The mammography has its share of risks as does any diagnostic imaging procedures. The risks are relatively minor but they are important to acknowledge and they include:

- Radiation Concerns
- Discomfort from breast manipulation
- Interpretation difficulty due to young age
- Interference due to talcum powders, hormones, breast implants, previous surgery.

After a mammography a patient may be on the way home with great news or further instructions. Usually the latter means that there is something to be concerned about. The procedure is a major aide and it's imperative to have it done.

Contrast Agents for Mammography



When engaging in a diagnostic imaging procedure it's vital to understand the procedure in detail. It's important for the doctor performing the procedure to explain everything to the patient. It's also vital for the patient to ask every question that they may have in mind.

From radiation concerns, to possible to discomfort, to ultimate expectations it is of utmost importance for the patient and doctor to have an understanding.

Often times one particularly difficult subject is that of a contrast agent. A contrast agent is defined as "A substance introduced into a part of the body in order to improve the visibility of internal structure during radiography." It's important to be able to have the right agent and often times the right medium depends on the procedure as well as the patient.

Let's talk about contrast mediums for mammography and what we know. Based on studies dating back to 2003 it's been concluded that enhanced digital mammography is useful for finding lesions in dense breasts. The question about which type of media is used or could be used is a fair one to ask, even though contrast agents in mammography are not yet completely implemented.

An iodine based contrast medium can be used. Iodine based means that the media used has a high concentration of iodine. The patient's initial thought may be a little panic but it doesn't mean that it's something to fear. The contrast agents are high osmolar and low osmolar contrast agents. The contrast medium is applied through the use a needle and the level of concentration depends a great deal on how radiopaque the agent itself will be.

Some things to understand about contrast agents in general include the following:

- It is used in most diagnostic imaging procedures.
- Dosing is calculated on basis of lean body weight, among other things.
- Risk of injection may increase risk of adverse reaction.
- Iodine based contrast agents may cause a warming sensation shortly after injection.

There are always concerns about allergic reactions based on existing allergies of the patient to components of the contrast media.

Contrast enhanced mammography will become a major part of the breast cancer equation based on the results of several trials performed over a decade long period. It's important to provide patients with the knowledge and understanding of how this particular advent can only help.

It's also vital as a physician to be able to lobby for this particular advent because it can only enhanced a physician's reputation in looking to provide the best treatment.

Mammogram Images

The mammogram is often times what will determine the level of difficulty in terms of a woman's battle with breast cancer. Early detection through a timely procedure can mean a positive outcome while detecting a late stage tumor can mean a difficult and losing battle. Often times the quality and accuracy of the image depends on a few key factors such as:

- Equipment quality
- Breast Density
- Location of the tumor
- Stage of the tumor
- How well the image is read

At first glance these factors don't necessarily seem like they are in the same neighborhood but the truth is that they are. So what can the patient expect to see in a mammogram image? For one thing the patient will see lighter masses because of the density issue. Some of the key issues to explain to patients are:

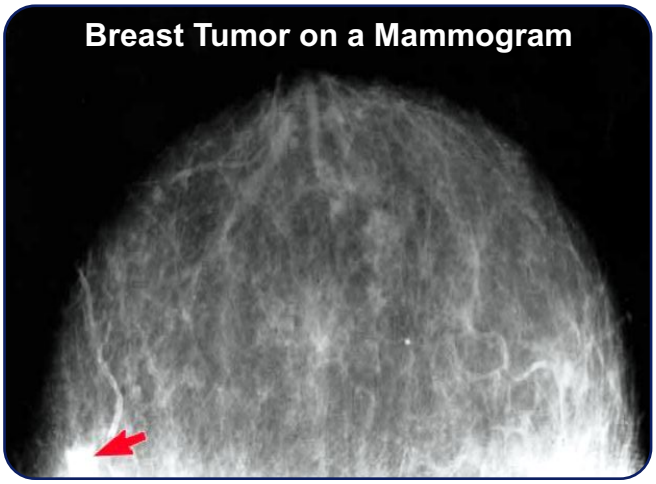
- A mammogram of a normal, fatty breast will contain dark areas, known as normal fatty issues.
- The lighter areas are dense tissue containing lobes and ducts.

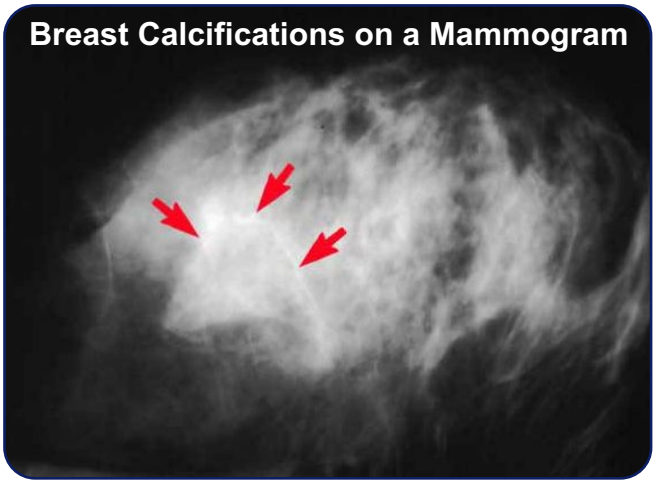
It's vital when getting the image to explain how age, breast density, and shape play a role in terms of the diagnosis. The density of breast tissue can make it really impossible to see if there is or if there isn't a cancerous lesion present. An image with high density is common in younger women.

Abnormal mammograms tend to be associated with possible cancerous tumors by patients but the fact is that sometimes it may be that the image itself is revealing calcifications. A calcification is not a tumor but rather tiny bits of calcium forming clusters.

The worst case scenario is that calcification is a benign early stage tumor. The outcome of the calcification will likely be explained in a follow up comparison procedure that's done after three months of initial discovery.

While equipment itself cannot heal the patient, it's vital for the doctor to have the very best equipment they possibly can. A re furbished mammography system that's been thoroughly inspected and made to function like new, or better can mean the difference between a quality image and a hard to read image.





Patient Preparation on the Mammogram Front

It's vital that a patient understand the preparation that's required in terms of a mammogram. Often times not being educated on the procedure can be a source of difficulty for the patient. While education falls on the shoulders of the physician ordering the procedure, it's good for the patient to engage in research as well and understand a few key elements.

The preparation for a mammogram is simple and follows these easy steps:

- The patient needs to choose a facility that's properly certified.
- Schedule the test for when the breasts are least likely to be tender (post menstruation)
- Provide the physician with prior images if you have any, they may serve as a comparison and help establish any discrepancies.
- Don't use deodorant prior to the test or anything containing metallic particles.
- Consider using over the counter pain medication if you feel that your procedure is likely to be painful.

A certification is vital because it ensures that the facility you are going to is held to, and meets specific standards. It's not enough that a facility merely has the equipment, it's major that the facility be considered capable. The tenderness of a woman's breast is a key consideration. A mammogram may be uncomfortable; a breast that's tender will likely lead to a more uncomfortable procedure and the tenderness of the tissue may give a different reading, not necessarily of cancer, but certainly something different. Pre menopausal women can do this a week after their period, the week before and the week of the period will be a time when tenderness is at its height. The provision of images prior to the procedure is very important.

If there have been lesions, calcifications, benign tumors, or masses, it's important that the physician know it and be able to use the previous image as a comparison. The results of a new image may reveal changes, good and bad, in so far as the status of the breast is concerned. The usage of deodorant and any other type of perfume, powder, or form of ointment is prohibited.

If the patient wants to smell good that's all well but the truth is that those very pleasant smells can cause image confusion. It's the metallic particles that may throw a monkey wrench in the image. It's vital that this particular prep step not be violated by the patient. While the prep is vital, the physician needs to be able to tell the patient the possible discomfort that may be felt during the procedure itself. It's important to know what the patient can take even if it's just an over the counter remedy.

The facility needs to not only count on quality equipment but also on a staff that can explain preparation properly and aid the patient in making it as comfortable as possible.

Types of Mammogram

So, you are going to perform a mammogram on a patient. It's vital that the patient know what their options are. When a patient goes to get a mammogram the questions asked will be something like this:

- What will the mammogram do?
- What will the mammogram reveal?
- Will I need another?
- Will the process hurt?
- Is there a difference between one mammogram and another?
- Is one more painful than another?

These are questions that need to be answered by the physician ahead of time and that serve as educational tools for future reference. The mammogram serves one of two purposes and sometimes both, they are:

- Establishing any abnormalities.
- Establishing the location of any lesions.
- Breast cancer tumor sizes and locations.

The two types of mammograms are known as:

- Screening mammogram
- Diagnostic Mammogram

A screening mammogram is simply the first type of mammogram that a woman has done. The screening mammogram basically let's the patient know if they do or don't require further examination. When the procedure is diagnostic it serves as a way to help the patient see if the mass is a tumor, the stage of the tumor, and establishing a proper treatment program.

A mammography system that's finely tuned can make a huge difference. Refurbished systems are often times as effective if not more effective than new systems. It's important for physicians to understand that the quality of system they have is vital to an effective diagnosis and positive patient feedback.

Which Mammography System is Right?

You have made the decision to provide mammograms as a part of your facility's services. The question that begs to be asked is: **What system is right for you?** The factors that will play a role in making the right decision include:

- Location.
- Site planning.
- Available space.
- Financial considerations.
- Demand for mammograms.
- System capacity.

Where you are located is a big deal because often times there are areas where the demand is higher but the services are not as readily available. There have been studies that show certain regions have a shortage on a county by county basis of radiological professionals.

If there is a great concentration of professionals performing mammograms, acquiring a system may not be a cost effective measure.

Site planning is an important consideration before acquiring a mammography system as well. Often times it's not just about space but it's also about environmental regulations, whether or not certain regions permit the usage of a system that employs radiation dosages and so on.

Your availability in terms of space is crucial. Diagnostic imaging procedures can make a patient feel uncomfortable and claustrophobic. While once the procedure has begun patients accommodate easily, it's key to ensure that you have ample space in which to perform the mammogram.

Before purchasing a system you have to look at how cost effective it will be. The cost of the system is important. Often times it's smarter to buy a quality refurbished system that has already been proven to work as opposed to a brand new one that may have un-discovered imperfections. System capacity is a big consideration as well as everything else.

You want to make sure that your system can perform well. It's vital that the system itself be able to perform all the functions. One key factor is a good image, without that it's impossible to perform an effective service. Ultimately demand is also a big player in the equation.

It's vital to know your population, factors such as, age group, and incidence of cancers are important. Often times certain areas are less likely to be populated by women than others. A mammogram is not a luxury and it should always be at the top of women's minds. Statistics often times make it difficult from area to area so demand may seem lower.

Once considerations have been made it will be very important to decide a few key factors.

- Which brand has a better system?
- What size system you want?
- Do you want a full field system?

Our team of experts here at Amber Diagnostics is always ready to take your call and answer any questions you may have. From site planning to knowledge of the system, we will walk you through the purchase process and we will stand by you through installation and use. We not only look forward to helping you acquire the right system but to making sure that you and your patients are satisfied.

Features to Consider When Purchasing a Mammography System

You have decided to purchase a system and your big consideration revolves around the features of the system. Let's say that you want a full field digital mammography system. The definition of full field mammography is "A procedure similar to conventional mammography with the exception of a dedicated electronic detector system used to computerize and display the X-Ray information." Essentially the full field digital mammography system is the improvement to the existing system and in many practices it's considered the gold standard.

A full field digital mammography system may have the following features to consider:

- Digital flat panel detector.
- Rotation.
- Footswitches.
- Spot compression paddles.
- Magnification stand.
- X-Ray Tube.

The full field system has advantages that help improve the image. The workflow, a key factor, is a lot smoother and the technologists can qualify image quality quicker. The level of patient satisfaction increases with the use of full field digital mammography.

Often times the satisfaction comes from a reduced callback rate. The features and overall usefulness of a full field digital mammography system allows the facility to service more patients and to do so effectively.

There is still a use for analog systems and viewing film comparatively with digital images does help spot areas that may have been missed. The digitizing of prior film creates a hybrid that only improves image quality while working with the already existing history of the patient.

Full field digital mammography helps detection as much and in some cases more than screen film mammography. Some facilities prefer to stick with screen film because of the age of full field digital mammography. Full field digital mammography has only been around les than ten years so, while some consider it a gold standard, others may still consider still too new.

Features such as the flat panel detector improve the quality of the image and may actually provide greater detail adjusting for patient factors such as:

- Age.
- Breast tissue density.
- Lesion size.
- Possible tumor stage.
- Location of the tumor.

Features such as foot switches may well serve as a determining factor with regards to what the facility is looking for. Physicians and practitioners have to be able to perform the procedure without feeling like the lack space or a properly laid out set of controllers. A big consideration is the level of radiation emitted by the equipment. Often times it's important to make the patient feel at ease with regards to the word “radiation.”

Comparing Mammography Systems

Before you make a choice in terms of the mammography system that you want to buy it's vital to make sure that you have a comparison between systems. One system may be better than another in terms of technical specs. There's a great possibility that one system may actually be better as far as preference, location, space, and patients is concerned. It's important to compare the systems because without knowing, you may make the wrong decision.

The first thing to remember is that the brand does not make the quality. While GE is a good bet so to is a system from Lorad or Siemens. It's important to purchase a system that you are comfortable with. What you chose will depend on the procedure, if you want to perform a biopsy and it will also depend on whether or not you are interested on a digital or analog system.

As you plan your system purchase the size of your facility will be a vital player in terms of your decision. A smaller system may be better, or a bigger system may be what you are looking for. It's also important to purchase a system from someone that will take into consideration delivery, assembly, and support.

Below is a comparison chart that gives a side by side listing of select features from systems in each of those brands.

GE Senographe 2000D

Lorad M III

Siemens Mammomat 3000 Nova

GE Senographe 2000D Full Field Digital System	Lorad M III	Siemens Mammomat 3000 Nova
Flat monitor	Magnification	Glass Shielding
Console with CD	Paddles	6 large cassettes 6 Small Cassettes
Diagnostic console	Photo timing Magnification	Analog Used for biopsy

Our team of experts her at Amber Diagnostics will guide you through the process from beginning to end.

We will help you compare systems, explain the benefits of each system as it relates to your practice and give you the recommendation best suited for the needs of your practice and your patients. If you have any questions please feel free to give us a call.

Costs and Advantages of Used Systems

You want to be able to perform a mammogram in your facility. One key question to ask yourself is whether or not you should buy a new system. With the cost associated with medical technology, a new system may well be cost prohibitive. A refurbished system may be the best alternative for your practice.

When you purchase a refurbished you are buying a system that's already been tested and that's often times been made to function far better than a new one.

Purchasing a new system can be cost prohibitive but it can also be unpredictable. Often times systems that have been freshly cleared go for a few years before it's discovered that some technical flaw may make it extremely inaccurate.

A machine that's cost prohibitive and may end up risking your practice is not a good bet. Some systems could go as high as 500,000 dollars and not necessarily give you what you are looking for.

A refurbished system can be sold for a fraction of that cost and give you better and more reliable service.

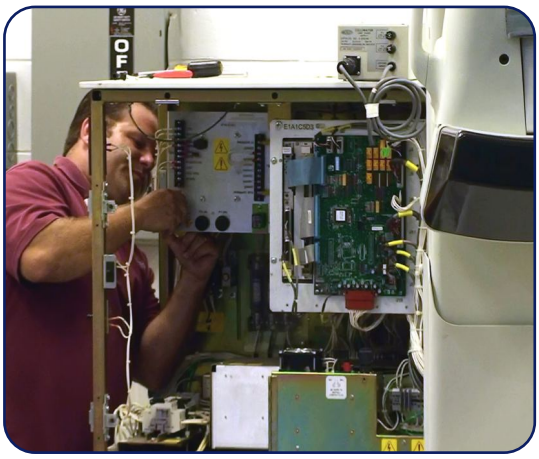
Part of the advantage of a used system is that not only is it cheaper but it also gives you a wide range of choices from digital to analog. While some sites may feel better using a digital system, some may prefer analog systems with specific features.

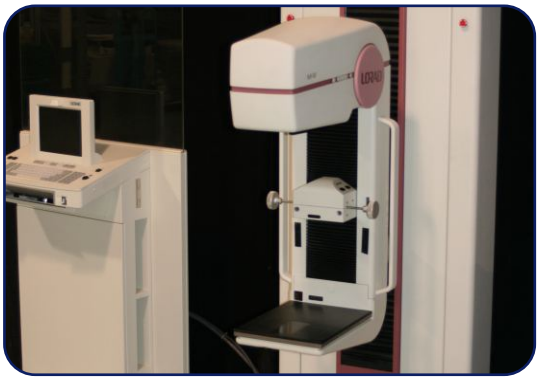
A good thing about used systems is the fact that you can trace where it's been and if it's effective or not. Chances are that if it underwent a recall, or several repairs, you will not be using it. Our team of experts here at Amber Diagnostics specializes in finding the very best in refurbished equipment. We not only inspect the equipment but we also ensure that the refurbishing process has it functioning to optimal standards.

The advantage of purchasing your system through us is that we will work with you in order to find the right system. We will put the system through a rigorous inspection process and restore it to a like new condition from paint to any and all mechanical repairs it may need.

A refurbished system has to be inspected the same way and it follows a stricter set of rules than a new system. No refurbished mammography system that doesn't meet quality standards will be out in the market. A new system can have many things wrong with it and still be packaged and sold at an almost crippling price.

Tips for Purchasing a Mammography System





Before committing to the purchase of a mammography system you need to keep a few things in mind. Let's assume that you decide you want a new system, you need to understand:

- Difference in system quality.
- Difference in system size.
- Difference in system cost.
- How your chosen brand rates in comparison to others.
- How your chosen system relates to workflow.
- Reviews of the system you have chosen.

The system is not the only consideration to keep in mind when shopping for what you want. The provider is a big consideration as well so you again need to consider a decent list of factors such as:

- Length of time in the medical technologies sector.
- Knowledge of equipment being sold.
- Ability to give a strong comparison between systems.
- Process for acquiring systems.
- Inspection procedures.
- Work Warranty.
- Support.

The quality of a system may simply differ in terms of how the system was first assembled in the manufacturer. When the system is brand new, that can be a problem but with a refurbished system that's a consideration that's rarely part of the equation. Size and cost are a good set of factors too; always ensure that you are not attempting to fit a large system in a small place. While most systems are not overly prohibitive a space that's not properly planned may well mean that effective workflow will be impeded.

It's vital to know what other imaging centers and professionals are saying about your system. If the system has a large number of negative reviews you may want to consider a different one. If you judge a system solely by what the manufacturer states in a brochure, you will likely make a less than educated decision. When finding out about your possible purchase make sure that you ask an experienced sales team the proper questions. A team of experts will always point you in the right direction because they know what's good and bad about certain systems.

Always go with experience, especially when purchasing a refurbished mammography system, or diagnostic imaging system in general. When you purchase a system from an outfit with experience you are guaranteed to have help in making the right decision. Often times the knowledge from individual research is not enough. You have to purchase from a place where inspection, warranty, and support are a major staple.

We here at Amber Diagnostics pride ourselves in our experience, attention to detail, and our thorough knowledge of the very best equipment on the market as well as dedication to our clients.

Mammography Regulations

It's important to understand what your state and federal regulations are as far as diagnostic imaging procedures are concerned. An MRI scan, a CT Scan, and an X-Ray are not just performed in any facility. A facility that houses any or all of these machines has to be certified by the FDA and adhere to strict regulations. The mammogram is not the exception to the rule as it also requires strict regulations.

It's vital for a center or practice to know these regulations and to understand if there is any variance from state to state. Some common and unchanging regulations include:

- Every mammogram has to be certified
- Certain staff members must meet strict standards
- X-rays are reviewed for quality and information on radiation dose, which are typically very low.

While it's important to observe these and other regulations it's also vital to understand what the state mandates. If you live in a state like California or a state like Michigan the rules may be different in minor or major ways.

As a way to provide an example the following is a set of regulations from the state of California with regards to a new and fully certified facility:

- Notify CDPH, Radiologic Health Branch (RHB) of your intention to perform mammography.
- Have a medical physicist who has been authorized by RHB perform a complete evaluation of the facility and each mammographic machine(s). Deficiencies found must be corrected.
- Fax or mail application for State certificates, physicist report(s), including corrective action documentation of deficiencies, and machine registration forms to the RHB.
- Arrange for an onsite inspection by an RHB inspector.
- When the inspection and all submissions are approved, you will receive a State certificate for each approved machine valid for up to six months, the time allotted for accreditation review.
- After passing accreditation review, send/fax RHB a copy of the ACR certificate for each machine. You will receive a new State certificate for each machine issued an ACR certificate, valid until the FDA certificate expiration date.

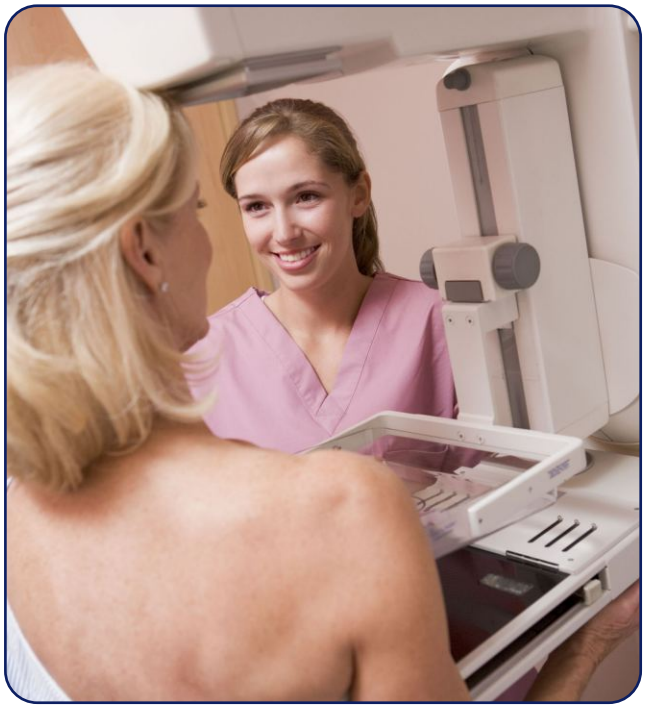
The rules mentioned are merely examples of what one state may require when compared to another. Generally states are in fair parity to federal regulations. Most of these rules may represent cumbersome paperwork but they do not make the process worst, they are there to help you with issues that may ultimately determine if your facility is fit or not to perform procedures.

Radiation Regulations for the Mammogram

When you are starting a new facility that provides mammograms or just adding a mammography machine, it's vital that you understand radiation regulations. Radiation is concern because long term exposure leaves a patient with a possibility for developing cancer down the line. With other modalities the exposure level tends to be higher and as a result the concerns are little bit higher as well.

Where the mammogram is concerned, it's important to stress to patients that radiation is used in very small measurements. Yes patients will still deal with radiation exposure, however it's not quite as bad as it's often made out to be. What would be a danger would be employing a far older machine that no longer meets FDA mandates and

It is important to know that the much older equipment that's used is not the same as quality refurbished equipment. All of the newer analog and digital machines employ a greater and far stricter set of guidelines with regards to radiation dosage. Refurbished machines are inspected thoroughly and anything that may have been wrong or may be in need of repair is taken care of right away.



Make sure that the patient knows a few things as well such as:

- Dosage is minimal in the mammogram.
- Radiation is not a cancer warranty.
- The level of radiation in a mammogram is much less significant than in a different procedure such as a CT Scan.

Radiation plays a major part in the accreditation of a facility and therefore requires that the dosage standards be followed by the facility. Simply purchasing a machine and deciding to offer a service will not work. With the mammogram the accreditation of the facility can be removed if this or any of the other rules set forth are violated.

It's important to deal with an equipment provider that will give you all the pertinent information in terms of regulations. There may well be a regulation that's specific to state or even municipality. Knowing what your radiation limitations are is a good idea because ultimately you may find yourself with a machine you have no use for.

Mammography Reimbursement

A key consideration for physicians engaging in the cost of any diagnostic imaging system is whether or not the amount of procedures and reimbursement is going to justify the expense. The concern comes over the fact that there is a cost prohibitive nature in the machines. From CT scanners, to MRI scanners, to X-Rays, there is a legitimate concern as far as price goes.

Mammography is no different, even if you purchase a system that's re-furbished and in better likely working condition than a newer system. The big concern is what the reimbursement schedule looks like. If your site has been planned properly to house a mammography machine and you have the patients that require it, you still don't want to force and self refer for an unnecessary procedure, if one has already been performed without abnormality.

The 2012 mammography coverage determined the following:

- Under age 35 no payment is allowed for screening.
- Range 35 to 39 pay one screening mammogram performed on a woman between ages of 35 and 40 and its baseline cost.
- Past age 39 it can be performed annually.

These guidelines for payment were laid out by the centers for Medicare and Medicaid services when dealing with Medicare coverage for screening mammography. This particular determination is indicative that it's important to know and understand your demographic and the demand as far as your demographic is concerned.

It's vital to not be reckless, patients can't be forced to undergo difficult procedures unless absolutely necessary. If the procedure is diagnostic as opposed to screening the rules are different. A diagnostic mammogram's coverage will be covered if the following conditions are met:

- Signs or symptoms of breast disease.
- Personal history of breast cancer.
- A personal history of biopsy proven benign disease.

It's important to help patients by allowing them the choice to get their procedure done at your facility. It's still vital to allow your practice and center the ability to justify costs such as electricity and staff as well as proper servicing of equipment. It's also important to explain coverage under insurance to patients. While patients often times are educated on what the insurance covers, it's good for them to know either way.

Private insurance companies have different guidelines and schedules as far as coverage and reimbursement so it's going to be different than those who depend on Medicare and Medicaid. While the current legislation known as the affordable care act may make a difference there, currently the rules for coverage are standard. If you have any questions about re-furbished mammography systems please feel free to give us a call. Our team of experts here at Amber Diagnostics is always eager to answer your questions and aid you in the purchase process.

One Last Thing

You have decided to expand your practice to perform mammograms. You have to make the decision of what that expansion is going to mean to you. It's not just buying a piece of equipment and putting it into your allotted space. You have to make sure that what you're buying is necessary and more importantly correct for your patients.

Breast cancer is among the leading killer of women ages 40 to 49. While advocacy has made a difference in education there is still a long way to go. Some major factors in your decision need to be:

- Patient demographic.
- Geographic factors.
- Accessibility to imaging.
- Environmental concerns (according to location).
- Certifications.
- Experience.
- Equipment.

Your patient demographic will determine if it's necessary for you to have the equipment. It makes sense to invest the capital, time, and effort of you have a large population of women that may run the risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer. Geographic factors such as your county may play a role. Where you live there may be a higher incidence of cancers and therefore the need for mammography equipment may be greater. Often times there arte places where detection comes at a far later point and therefore becomes harder to treat. It's very important to understand what the statistics are where you live. Accessibility to imaging is vital in making your decision.

If where you are located there's limited imaging access, it will be very important to be a pioneer. Mammography equipment would open up a new dimension in your practice but more importantly it would allow your patients to have a place to go for procedures. Environmental concerns are an issue at least on a location by location basis.

Before you have that mammography machine installed you need to understand what the environmental concerns are. While mammography machines employ minimum usage of radiation there may be some objection depending on where you are. The word radiation is sometimes intimidating to people that may not understand how helpful it actually is to cancer patients in the short term. The next issue is certifications and what certifications mean to you.

A facility that performs mammograms needs an FDA certification. A certification means the following two things:

1. **Your facility meets all the strict imaging requirements.**
2. **You know what you are doing.**

Once your certifications are there you need to concern yourself with experience.

Experience with complex conditions is vital to your success. Do not buy a mammography machine because it may look good and it may help you look like a pioneer. You should purchase it because you have the experience and can help a patient. It's very difficult to treat a condition if you are not sure how to approach it. Lastly, equipment will need to play a major role.

When you purchase equipment you need to really look carefully. A new system may be cost prohibitive and may not be as effective as you'd like to think. Often times systems that are fresh may have some imperfection or defect that requires expensive repairs. A way to combat the issues is to purchase a refurbished system and make sure that system is properly certified like new. It's vital that you work with a provider whose experience in the market is strong and that can guide you through your experience.

What We Will Do

It's important to expand when your patient's well being is your primary concern. You have studied all your factors before deciding to buy a mammography system. Everything has been thoroughly researched and you are aware of what the pros and cons are. The need is met, the patients are there, the monetary factors are there and you know you can get the certification. So what's next?

You want to purchase the equipment and have decided that refurbished is the right way to go. What exactly is the next step? You want to thoroughly research your providers and see who will be the best fit for you. When you do your research you need to count on:

- **Experience**
- **Knowledge**
- **Attention to detail**
- **Customer Service**
- **Reliability**

Buying from the right provider is a big deal and we here at Amber Diagnostics pride ourselves in being that provider. When it comes to experience we have a 20 year track record that has shown steady growth. Our knowledge is not limited to just mammography systems. From X-Rays, to MRI scanners, to CT scanners, to many other modalities, we have a great ability to spot the right equipment. We won't stick you with an ineffective machine and call it a day.

Attention to detail is a key, and we enforce it greatly. We work with our customers from beginning to end. We ensure that the equipment is what you are looking for and we work with you from price to delivery, until you are thoroughly satisfied. Our customer service practices are the best.

We ask all the important questions and provide our customers with all the right answers. It's important to us that our customers feel like they can ask questions comfortably and get the right answer without hassle. We will make sure that customer is ready to make a purchase and move at their pace. Our reliability stems from our years of experience.

With 20 years we know the business; we know the needs of our customers. We want to provide the best service so we tailor ourselves to the needs of customers and at the same time we like to help them by being a guide. Our experience in the US and in international markets makes us the right fit for any buyer. You can rely on us to help you make the right choice. Our team of dedicated experts is here to help.

Still Have Questions?

Though this guide book is intended to inform you on the foundations of buying and safely utilizing a Mammography system, we're pretty certain it must have raised some questions along the way.

Our knowledgeable and attentive team at Amber Diagnostics is here to help you find the perfect Mammography system for your business. If the time is not right for you to purchase radiology equipment just yet, give us a call anyway! We will be happy to address all your questions and concerns.

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Be sure to subscribe to our Amber Blog as well for tips and trends in the imaging industry.

MAMMOGRAPHY SYSTEM BUYERS GUIDE

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