

Radiation Exposure

What is radiation?

- Radiation is a type of energy that comes from our surroundings:
 - Radon gas from the ground
 - Cosmic rays from space when we fly in an airplane
 - Bricks in our homes
 - Foods such as bananas and fish
- Radiation can also be made by humans. In medicine, radiation is used to take pictures of the inside of your body.
- Radiation that passes through your body can make changes to your cells, but the amount of radiation is a low dose and your body typically fixes these cell changes with no problems later in life.
- Exposure to very high doses of radiation, such as the Fukushima or Chernobyl nuclear disasters, can cause damage and cancer.

Are mammogram safe?

- Mammogram uses a small and safe amount of radiation to take pictures of your breasts.
- The dose of radiation from a mammogram is similar to the natural radiation you get from taking a plane trip from North Carolina to California.
- Getting your mammogram is very important because it can find cancer in your breast at a very early stages when it is most treatable.
- The benefit of getting a mammogram and potentially finding a breast cancer early is much larger than the risk from the small dose of radiation that your body will likely fix.

Questions? The UNC Mammography Clinic can be reached at (984)-974-8762 if you have any questions.