Diagnosis and Screening
When it comes to breast health, early detection is your best protection. Mammography is a standard component of the annual checkup for American women over 40. At the Breast Health Center, we recognize that mammograms can be stressful for some women and we strive to make your mammography visit as comfortable and convenient as possible. Beyond diagnostic mammography, the Marin General Hospital Breast Health Center offers a comprehensive range of diagnostic techniques that put us at the forefront of care.

Digital Mammography with Computer-Assisted Diagnosis
Digital mammography reduces x-ray exposure and can improve cancer detection. We have routinely used this technology for many years. Digital mammography captures images instantly for immediate viewing on a computer monitor. Through computer-assisted diagnosis, the radiologist can zoom in on the digital image and examine small areas of breast tissue in detail. We use computer-assisted diagnosis for all mammograms, an uncompromising approach that yields excellent detection rates that are on par with those of top university hospitals.
The High Risk Breast Program

Between three and six percent of women who come in for a mammogram with no history of cancer turn out to be in the increased-risk category. We are committed to screening all women for elevated breast cancer risk. Any mammography patient assessed as being at an increased risk for breast cancer and/or carrying a genetic mutation associated with an increased risk can be referred to our High Risk Breast Program for further evaluation.

When a woman is identified as having an increased risk, we offer her counseling and enrollment in our ongoing, personalized surveillance plan. Each patient receives personalized recommendations based on her risk factor(s), age, health, and heredity. Patients who need individual evaluation by a breast surgeon or breast medical oncologist are referred directly. A team of specialists, including a medical oncologist, surgeon, radiologist, and other experts collaborate on surveillance plans.

Compassionate and Efficient

If a lump is detected in the breast, the next step is diagnostic testing. We understand the stress of waiting for test results, so we do all we can to expedite the process. Patients are promptly notified if there is a finding on a screening mammogram. Where appropriate, we introduce our onsite Breast Health Nurse Specialist who can answer questions in detail and provide information and support.

Biopsies and Diagnostic Testing

Biopsies are procedures that extract tissue for microscopic testing to determine whether a lump or abnormality is malignant. Biopsies are usually performed in an outpatient setting, using minimally invasive techniques. Depending on the individual case, we perform a variety of biopsies and other diagnostic technologies, including:

- Breast MRI
- Breast MRI-guided biopsy
- Breast stereotactic-guided needle biopsy
- Breast ultrasound
- Breast ultrasound-guided needle biopsy
- Expert cytopathology
- Fine-needle aspiration
- Lymph node biopsy

Battling Breast Cancer

Marin General Hospital’s Cancer Institute offers cutting-edge treatment on par with a university medical center, right here in Marin. The Cancer Institute covers the complete spectrum of breast cancer care, from diagnosis to survivorship. Our expert cancer specialists collaborate not only with each other, but with their patients to make them partners in their own care. Treatment is highly personalized, based on the type of cancer, the woman’s personal preference, and her overall health.

Each breast cancer patient is provided a patient navigator from our Center for Integrative Health & Wellness to serve as her educator, advocate, and guide throughout the treatment process. By offering support every step of the way, our patient navigators help ease a woman’s treatment.

Patients have access to a full range of cutting-edge treatments and research trials, including radiation, chemotherapy, hormonal treatments, and targeted therapies that block a tumor’s growth and progression. The program also offers top-notch reconstructive surgery, including total skin-sparing mastectomy. The Cancer Institute emphasizes treating the whole person, and patients are encouraged to complement their care with a variety of integrative treatments offered by the Center for Integrative Health & Wellness.
Meet Our Breast Health Nurse Specialists
Our Breast Health Nurse Specialists have a combined experience of over 45 years in nursing. They not only provide diagnosis information and answers to your questions, but also offer emotional support and guidance on next steps. If a positive diagnosis is made, they help connect you to a surgeon/medical oncologist from our Cancer Institute, as well as various cancer resources. In addition, they can also help you locate integrative resources from our Center for Integrative Health & Wellness, including massage, acupuncture, nutrition, exercise, counseling, and group support. What’s more, they serve as advocates for you at weekly Breast Cancer Tumor Boards where patients’ needs and concerns are discussed.

Maria Dalmacio, MSN, FNP-BC, has more than three decades of nursing experience and a commitment to serve the women of Marin. Maria obtained her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of San Francisco, a commission as an officer of the United States Air Force Nurse Corps from San Francisco State University, and a Master of Science in Nursing: Family Nurse Practitioner from California State University in Dominguez Hills. She is also a Certified Navigator – Breast Provider through the National Consortium of Breast Centers. Drawing on her extensive experience, Maria has been instrumental in the development and implementation of our High Risk Breast Program. She has also served as an executive board member for Michelle’s Place, a non-profit organization that provides resources to women and families affected by breast cancer.

Nicole Loiacono, RN, BSN, received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing with a Public Health Certificate from the University of San Francisco and brings nearly two decades of experience to the team. After working in San Francisco for many years, Nicole wanted to work within the community where she grew up. She joined the Breast Health Team in 2013 to care for patients with breast cancer and educate women about the importance of breast health and screening.

“\textit{I have nothing but good things to say about this center. It was easy to make an appointment, staff was friendly, no wait time, and I felt my ultrasound was thorough and not at all rushed. I feel very fortunate to have this facility and their wonderful staff to address such important medical issues during what can be a very scary, emotional time.}”

- Patient review from Yelp
Appointments

Screening Mammograms
In order to perform your mammogram, we require a physician’s order.

• New patients: have your physician fax orders to 1-415-925-7317
• Returning patients: call 1-415-461-7770 to schedule an appointment

*If you or someone you know can’t afford a mammogram, please contact us at 1-415-461-7770. Grants and funds are available in cases of financial hardship.*

Diagnostic Mammograms
All diagnostic mammograms and other breast diagnostic services require a physician’s order even if you are a previous patient. Please have your physician fax prescriptions for appointments to 1-415-925-7317.

Appointment Hours
Monday, Thursday, Friday: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm
Tuesday and Wednesday: 8:00 am - 9:00 pm
Saturday: 8:00 am – 4:30 pm

“Our goal at the Breast Health Center is to provide quality, personalized care in a compassionate environment. Our experienced breast team is committed to providing prompt, high quality services for the early detection, accurate diagnosis, and timely treatment of breast cancer using the most advanced techniques.”

— Dr. Natalya Lvoff, Radiologist and Medical Director of the Breast Health Center