

Don't Put Off Your Routine Mammogram

During the COVID crisis, people across the nation have been putting their routine procedures and appointments on hold. However, breast cancer is still highly prevalent and annual mammograms are critical in early detection. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), breast cancer is the second most common cancer among women in the United States. Advances in mammography, including the invention of FDA-approved digital mammography, can be credited with detecting 80 percent to 90 percent of breast cancers in women without symptoms.

OSF recognizes that patients and community members are looking for methods to schedule and receive services in the easiest, safest way possible and is launching an online self-scheduling tool for screening mammograms.

"We are very excited to bring online scheduling as an opportunity for our patients to book their mammo online for screening services. We are offering those services at both the main campus and our Centers for Health just down the street from us. We are really thrilled that they can do this linked to their My Chart and, therefore, the entire process takes a total of five clicks," said Kate Eschbach, MHA, RT(R)(MR)(CT), Director, Medical Imaging & Cardiology, OSF HealthCare.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the goal of screening mammography is to find cancer when it is still too small to be felt by breast self-examination or your doctor. Finding small breast cancers early by a screening mammogram greatly improves your chance for successful treatment.

"As we get closer to our new normal and realizing what that looks like, the importance of self care and preventative health care services is coming back to the front of mind for many of our patients and our community members. As we look towards 'how do we better serve during that time,' one of the features that we have brought back online is scheduling online at your convenience," said Eschbach.

The new online scheduling service for screening mammograms is currently available at OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Evergreen Park and OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford. Eschbach says believes this service will cater to patients' busy schedules, as well as their desire for virtual and touchless processes for needed services.

"It is available to all of our current patients. It's available to any new patients that are in our areas that are wanting to try our services here. They are asked a series of questions at the very beginning and it's very straightforward, simple ones. They are asking if the appointment is for a screening or an annual mammogram – yes or no. They're asking if you had a mammogram in the last year – yes or no. And they're asking if you have any history of breast implants or breast surgeries – yes or no. Those questions then lead you into the next scheduling screen where you get to pick your date and time that best works for you," Eschbach explained.

Each OSF facility is taking increased measures to keep those seeking care safe from infection in accordance with guidance from the IDPH and CDC. OSF is also monitoring everyone coming into its hospitals and off-site facilities while maintaining physical distancing in waiting areas.

The focus remains on the best interest of a patient's health overall.

"On day of service when patients arrive for their screening mammogram, they can expect to see our health care facility kept to the OSF standards following CDC guidelines for cleanliness regarding COVID safety during these current times," Eschbach continued.

Go to www.osfhealthcare.org/mammo for more information and to schedule your mammogram online in [Rockford](#) or the [Metro Region](#).