

## **A New Ally in the Fight Against Breast Cancer**

Breast cancer will affect an average of one in eight women sometime in their lifetime. It is the second most common cause of cancer related deaths in women. Numerous studies prove that early detection is a vital component in the successful treatment of breast cancer.

Mammograms play a central part in the early detection of breast cancer because they can detect changes in the breast that may be early signs of cancer, but are too small or subtle to be felt. The use of mammography has greatly enhanced the ability to detect breast cancers at earlier stages. Now a new technology called full field digital mammography shows great promise in the fight against breast cancer.

### **What is Full Field Digital Mammography**

Digital mammography uses computers and specially designed digital detectors to produce an image that can be displayed on a high-resolution computer monitor, and transmitted and stored just like computer files.

From a patient's point of view, having a digital mammogram is very much like having a conventional screen-film mammogram. Both film-based and digital mammography use compression and x-rays to create clear images of the inside of the breast. During all mammography exams, the technologist positions the patient to image the breast from different angles and compresses the breast with a paddle to obtain optimal image quality.

Unlike film-based mammography, digital mammograms produce images that appear on the technologist's monitor in a matter of seconds. There is no waiting for film to develop, which can mean a shorter time spent in the breast imaging suite.

