

Affordability, convenience, technology times two: University Center Imaging, your healthcare imaging advocate now in two locations

Benefits vs. Risks? Convenience vs. Technology? When it comes to healthcare patients need to be their own advocate. How many times has your insurance company sent you an explanation of benefits telling you where to go for your imaging needs after the procedure? Will you remember this the next time you need an exam performed? How often do you travel out of your way to have exams completed? These are all questions that patients should ask themselves when it comes to healthcare and their imaging needs.

During the month of October more than any other month, healthcare facilities and organizations turn their attention toward breast cancer and breast cancer awareness. Why we ask? Knowledge is power and the power of knowledge saves lives.

There's been great progress made in the early detection and treatment of breast cancer over the past 26 years. Today, researchers agree on more than 20 factors that increase breast cancer risk and several factors that lower risk. One of the most important things for you to keep in mind is that anyone can get breast cancer so early detection is key. But early detection means knowing where to go for the best technology available and what that technology means to "you".

At University Center Imaging (UCI), the enhanced Women's Health Services offer advanced technology including Digital Mammography, Breast MRI, DEXA and Ultrasound. "We are so committed to providing quality, cutting edge technology that we not only provide imaging services at the Oaks on Hibiscus Boulevard in Melbourne, but we have expanded our services in August to a sec-

Did you know?

The older a woman is, the more likely she is to get breast cancer? Caucasian women are more likely to get breast cancer than women of any other racial or ethnic group? African American women are more likely to die from breast cancer than Caucasian women? Men can get breast cancer, although it's rare?

Source: Susan G. Korman for the Cure; 2009

ond location at the Centre of Suntree on Wickham Road," explains Jenny Marshall, UCI's Director of Operations.

Aside from self and clinical breast examination, film technology has been the standard detector used in conventional mammography for many years. Most women cringe at the thought of the yearly ordeal. However, new developments in detector technology and computers now offer women full field digital mammography.

UCI is only one of four facilities in the area offering this true full field, digital mammography technology. The advanced application process is made possible through digital imaging, automated computer-aided detection (CAD) which further improves diagnostic sensitivity by reviewing the scan for all primary signs of breast cancer and assisting the radiologist in catching any small calcifications. These advances include all of the following: lower dose radiation, improved image quality, computer-aided diagnosis, digital archiving, three-dimensional visualization techniques and reduction in breast compression pressure.

Not only are the images transferred directly to the technologist's workstation and on to the radiologist for immediate review but your scan time just got reduced. The

ability to produce an electronic image on a video monitor also allows the entire breast to be viewed including changes in the breast and adjacent muscle.

Relax; a suspicious area needs a closer look? Trust UCI's board certified, on-site radiologists to review your images and schedule an ultrasound with one of the trained technologists. Ultrasound is often necessary to distinguish between a solid lump and a fluid-filled (cystic) lump.

Mammography has proven to be a very effective tool in detecting early breast cancer. However, one factor that can affect the accuracy of a mammogram is the density of a woman's breasts. When this is the case, the glandular tissues of the breast are displayed as very white areas. These areas make it difficult to see smaller changes in your breast from year to year. This being the case, a Breast MRI is generally recommended. This non-invasive procedure is of benefit in these situations, (post-surgical breasts, dense breasts and implants). With the Breast MRI, the contrast between soft tissues in the breast is 10 to 100 times greater than that obtained with mammograms. Performing this exam may reduce the number of breast biopsies needed to evaluate a suspicious breast mass.

Early detection has always been a patient's best protection when it comes to any type of cancer. This year alone, an estimated 214,200 new cases of breast cancer are expected to occur in women in the United States. The American Cancer Society guidelines suggest a baseline by age 40 and after age 40 every one-to-two years. You should begin having mammograms earlier than 40 if you have a family history of breast cancer.

When speaking with your physician, be your own advocate. Discuss your family history, find out if you have dense breasts

and learn what a "normal" mammogram means. Women need to be aware of all the different technology options that are available to them. Breast self-examination is a great beginning but we need to look at all the technological advancements in place today. Are you getting the best image possible? Is it true full field digital mammography? Discuss Mammograms or the possibility of a Breast MRI or an Ultrasound if you are still unsure of what your particular medical need is.

Patients have always had a choice as to where they want to have their diagnostic imaging performed. At UCI, we want to make that choice easy. We are not limited to what we can offer patients as far as outpatient diagnostic imaging. Patients receive only the best from the moment they enter the center until the time they arrive back at their physician's office. Now we have made that choice even easier with the added convenience of a second location in Suntree. UCI offers short bore, open field MRI, CT, true full field Digital Mammography technology, not analog, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, echocardiograms, stress testing, fluoroscopy, DEXA scan, coronary calcium scoring, stroke risk assessments, and digital x-ray.

Our Ladies Lounge and multiple waiting areas offer added comfort and convenience while you are in our care.

But more importantly, you should know that at UCI we are committed to your continued health now and in the future by storing all patient imaging records electronically for added convenience for the patient and the physicians.

Talk to your physician and then contact UCI at 321-726-3800 (Oaks), 321-775-7100 (Suntree) or visit us online at www.universitycenterimaging.com for more information. ♦