

Breast Thermography

Over the past few years, I've been coming across tidbits of information about breast thermography. There are world-renowned "alternative" doctors singing the praises of this form of breast screening, at times suggesting we use it instead of mammograms. There are also well-known medical doctors who would vilify the technique.

I have breast cancer in my family. I must check that box each time I fill out a medical form.

Other boxes must also be checked to show that my risk may be higher, including having been significantly overweight and never having had children. I have often felt somewhat like I had to just sit and wait for the cancer diagnosis to be handed to me some day. Of course, I continued to have yearly mammograms. It was a decidedly inactive way of dealing with the possibilities. I needed some hope, more answers, and a plan to minimize my chances of getting breast cancer.

Breast thermography is a way to screen for heat in the breasts by using an infrared thermal imaging camera. Heat may be caused by tumors or by something even more fascinating to me—blood vessels that are actively beginning to heat up in order to feed an area that will someday become a tumor.

According to thermologyonline.org, "Thermography, with its non-radiation, non-contact, and low-cost basis, has been clearly demonstrated to be a valuable and safe early-risk marker of breast pathology, and an excellent case-management tool for the ongoing monitoring and treatment of breast disease, when used under carefully controlled, clinical protocols." People who show an abnormal thermogram are twenty times more likely to develop breast cancer. Imagine being able to catch a tumor before it even forms! That would give a person time to take some purposeful action in changing the direction of the disease before it takes hold.

I was excited to learn that Montana has its own breast thermography doctor and equipment. Dr. Mathew Schlechten, ND Naturopath, travels throughout several states (and is willing to go to others) providing these exams. He was scheduled to be in Bozeman during the week of my mammogram, so I scheduled a thermography exam.

Judy Schaap


For years now, I've been fascinated by medicines and healing techniques from across time and around the globe. In these times, we have access to all kinds of information on ways to seek wellness—from practitioners skilled in the most minute details of a patient's DNA, all the way to tapping into the energy of the Universe itself.

Often the information available comes in the form of advertisement by those who will earn a livelihood from our use of their products or services, which is all well and good, but I also find it helpful to read unbiased reports from a disinterested third party. Well, dear readers, in the next several issues of Natural Life, that will be me!

I will be exploring a variety of fascinating healing modalities from a layperson's perspective, as a reporter would, with nothing to gain from the experience except wisdom. I will ask the same questions you would if you were considering trying something. I will let you know of my resources and where to obtain more information should you desire. I welcome your ideas for future articles and interviews, which will shed light on topics of interest to you.

—Judy

Judy Schaap is a freelance writer and professionally trained clown living in Bozeman. Contact Judy at (406) 586-1118, or by e-mail at judyschaap@hotmail.com. Read her previous articles, "Behind the Red Nose—Diary of Bo-Ho-Ho the Clown," and "The Forgotten Victims of Meth," in free downloads (PDF) at NaturalLifeNews.com.



The exam room was divided by a screen which, during the examination, kept the examiner and the computer monitors on one side, while I and the thermographic camera was on the other side, with my modesty intact throughout the exam. I was instructed to sit alone, nude above the waist, in the cool room for about ten minutes to let my body temperature regulate to the room and the camera. The doctor then had me turn slightly to various angles for the camera to register the heat from my breasts. I asked to see the monitors and saw that the camera was registering various rainbow colors that coordinated with the heat emanating from my body. The entire exam, including the ten-minute adjustment period, took about twenty minutes.

There was no discomfort, no radioactivity, no touching, and no compression. The results of the test were given to a highly trained technician who deciphered the photographs and sent the results to my health-care practitioner. Those results included both verbal information and copies of the photographs.

The International Academy of Clinical Thermology strongly states that thermography does not take the place of mammograms. They are two very different exams that measure breast health in different ways, effectively multiplying your ability to be aware of your breast health. Dr. Schlechten offered that the combination of mammography, thermography, ultrasound, and a manual exam give a 99% rate of catching threats to your breast health.

Mammograms give a yes-or-no answer as to whether they see tumors. Certain types of cancers (about 20%) will not be detected by mammography for various reasons, but some of these cancers

will be discovered by thermography. Difficulties in reading mammograms can occur in women who are on hormone replacement, nursing, or have fibrocystic, large, dense, or enhanced breasts. According to BreastThermography.com, these types of breast differences do not cause difficulties in reading digital infrared scans.

Thermograms allow any small changes from year to year to be seen. Like your fingerprints, your thermograms should look essentially the same year after year. Variations can be detected that allow you and your health-care practitioner to make determinations in how to best address the changes. I was pleased to find out that a pro-active, pre-tumor treatment may successfully include using botanicals, nutritional changes, acupuncture, allergy elimination diets and massage. There's a sharp contrast indeed between these alternative, natural modalities and the post-tumor prospects of mastectomy, chemotherapy and radiology.

I will continue to utilize thermography in conjunction with mammogram, self-exam, and a manual exam by my doctor. I hope this information will encourage you to learn more about making a plan to actively pursue breast health and a long, healthy life. ■

I enjoy learning more about people before I accept them as part of my health-care team. I'll share with you a few bits of information on Montana's Dr. Mathew Schlechten, ND, as I've found him to be quite interesting.

Dr. Schlechten has studied natural medicine for over twenty years. He spent four years in naturopathic medical school in Phoenix. He studied with indigenous shamans in Panama for a year, studied Tai massage in Thailand, and Ayurvedic

medicine in India for six months. He studied Chinese medicine in San Francisco's Chinatown and is a certified massage therapist. He has been in private practice in Hamilton, MT, for four years. He specializes in detoxification programs, nutrition and preventative medicine.

Many of you may know from an earlier article that I am a professionally trained clown. I was thrilled to learn that part of Mathew Schlechten's interesting past included being an acrobat and juggler in the circus. I love well-rounded people!

Contact Dr. Mathew Schlechten at (406) 375-1771. Visit his website, MontanaBreastThermography.com.

RESOURCES:

International Academy of Clinical Thermology (866)-223-8866.
www.iact-org.org

American College of Clinical Thermology.
www.thermologyonline.org



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