

# “COVID did not stop cancer.”

Mammography and other cancer screenings remain essential, despite pandemic.

Each October, in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we are reminded that mammograms save lives by detecting breast cancer early, when it is most treatable. However, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many patients to delay their regular cancer screenings, prompting concern from care teams.

**“The fact is that COVID did not stop cancer. Women and men, of all ages and backgrounds, are diagnosed every day. Until we have a cure, early detection offers patients with breast cancer the best chance at successful treatment,”** said Dr. Yung-Mee Park, physician champion for breast cancer awareness at Kaiser Permanente South Bay Medical Center. “This October, I’d urge anyone who is overdue for screening to make that appointment.”



Experts agree that mammograms—an X-ray of the breast that can often find tumors that are too small for you or your doctor to feel—are the best screening test for people who are at average risk of breast cancer. A breast MRI may be recommended for those who are at higher risk due to family history or genetic mutation, or for those with very dense breasts or breast implants.

“Earlier this year, we temporarily suspended screening mammograms for our low-risk patients while we put COVID-19 safety measures into place,” says Dr. Mark Ashkan, co-assistant chief of service of diagnostic imaging at Kaiser Permanente South Bay Medical Center. “Those screenings resumed in May and we have clear protocols to protect the health and safety of both our patients and staff.”

Extensive safety measures have been put in place at all Kaiser Permanente facilities, including symptom screening at building entrances, frequent cleaning of surfaces and equipment, staggered appointment scheduling to support social distancing, and requiring all who enter Kaiser Permanente buildings to wear a mask.

**To make an appointment for a mammogram or other cancer screening, Kaiser Permanente South Bay members should call 1-800-780-1230.**