

BroadcastMed | Fighting Breast Cancer

SPEAKER 1: KGB and *FOX2 News* at 6:00 starts now.

SPEAKER 2: October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. And we wanted to take a closer look at how the fight has changed. And there has been some incredible developments, in terms of how women are screened for breast cancer.

SPEAKER 3: KTVU *FOX2 News'* Claudia Wong is here now with more on how the annual mammogram quality is now changing.

CLAUDINE: Yes, it is, technology really doing some remarkable things. Breast cancer screening is all about finding cancer as soon as possible. We have traditionally relied on 2D mammogram. But now, there's another option.

It is advanced technology that has, in some cases, found cancer years before it would have been detected by traditional scans, and it is saving lives. It's just one of those things that women have had to do for years.

SPEAKER 4: Compress the breast.

CLAUDINE: Face this machine, and all the smushing, and schlumping, and discomfort that goes right along with it.

SPEAKER 4: And we'll see how the paddle flexes with the breast.

CLAUDINE: And now, we can look closer than we ever have.

LINDA: This is probably the biggest thing to happen in women's imaging in 15 years, in terms of technology.

CLAUDINE: Welcome to 3-D mammography, or tomosynthesis. John Muir just got this new 3D machine at its Walnut Creek facility and is the only accredited facility in the East Bay to have it.

LINDA: We are literally taking 15 slices of images through your breast, where before, in standard mammography, it's only one image.

CLAUDINE: 15 images compared to one. What does that really mean? Well, take a look at this

scan. This is what a traditional scan looks like. That's one image. That's 2-D.

But when you have 3-D, you get 15 images. You can look closer and more in depth. Watch as that image becomes more defined. In this case, that definition meant finding cancer.

LINDA: With this technology, we were able to pinpoint and zero in right here. And this is a cancer, where--

CLAUDINE: Would it have likely been missed on 2D?

LINDA: Yes, absolutely. The studies have shown that this equipment will detect cancer up to 41% more, because it's so specific.

CLAUDINE: Dr. Deborah Kerlin says she got an early peek at this technology at a conference six or seven years ago, and immediately knew how significant it would be.

DR. KERLIN: It was clear to me that the images were so much better than traditional mammography.

CLAUDINE: And now that she has access, the impact has been profound.

DR. KERLIN: I've had two patients who they were just going to try it, because we were just getting used to how to using it. And they were very fortunate to have this detection earlier.

CLAUDINE: And it was small?

DR. KERLIN: Mhm. Yes

CLAUDINE: That's what you're finding, right? The small ones that you wouldn't have found otherwise?

DR. KERLIN: Correct.

You You might have found them next year?

DR. KERLIN: Perhaps one year, sometimes even two or three years.

CLAUDINE: And consider these numbers. Often an initial image can raise red flags, which mean women need to be called back for a second look. With 3-D--

LINDA: Our callback rate has been reduced 25% because of this technology.

CLAUDINE: Jolene Martin didn't even know the technology existed until this year. She got a regular 2D mammogram at her annual appointment.

JOLENE: I got a recall. And that made me nervous. I never had a recall.

CLAUDINE: So before she came back, she researched the 3-D option and requested it.

JOLENE: This is the latest. This is the greatest. And I just assumed, go that way, to be safe.

CLAUDINE: 3-D gave her a clean bill of health. But she wonders if going that route first would have saved her the worry altogether. But not everyone will get these 3-D scans. These machines cost about \$0.5 million.

LINDA: I've got eight units throughout John Muir, and to switch out all the units to tomosynthesis is a lot of money. So we're working on various different ways to raise money philanthropically.

CLAUDINE: And yet, John Muir says more women are asking for it.

LINDA: We're here pulling in patients from all over.

CLAUDINE: Because at the end of the day, women will schlump, and smush, and squeeze into any machine--

JOLENE: I want what's out there that can help me live the healthiest and the longest that I can. I think it's important that we look at it that way. Get what you can.

SPEAKER 2: That's fantastic technology right there. And for Jolene to actually say, hey, I want to do the research myself--

CLAUDINE: Absolutely.

SPEAKER 2: And then she found out about it. What about insurance in regards to the 3D? Is all the insurance companies covering this? Or if--

CLAUDINE: No.

SPEAKER 2: --hey, you're going to get a 3-D, we're not covering it?

CLAUDINE: Well, yeah. There are some insurance companies, John Muir says, that consider it still experimental. And so when it comes to covering it, they're saying, you know what? We're not going to covering it.

What John Muir does is that they let people pay the difference of what the company would cover for a 2D, and then you can pay the difference. Sometimes just as low as \$60. But what's good to know is that you need to do the research to find out if your insurance is really going to cover it.

SPEAKER 3: So ask the question, so you don't get that surprise bill, even if you were budgeting, even if it was \$60.

CLAUDINE: Absolutely.

SPEAKER 3: So at a cost of what-- some \$0.5 million, we have a few in the Bay Area, not just in John Muir. When we see more and at all the hospitals?

CLAUDINE: Well, that's the big question, right? And that was one of the things that Jolene Martin said. She goes, if this is the best, and this is going to save lives, then why don't we have it everywhere? We should have it everywhere.

That's the common sense approach to it-- right. If there's better technology, we want the better technology. The cost is a lot.

And so even John Muir is saying we've got to get philanthropic. We've got to figure out how to do it. There are a scattering of these devices throughout the North Bay, San Francisco. John Muir was the East Bay, but it's just going to take time.

The FDA approved it in 2012. John Muir's getting it. It's 2015. It's going to take time.

So the best advice, I think, for folks is that women, if you're going, call. Ask.

John Muir has one. It has seven others that are 2D. So if you really want 3D--

SPEAKER 2: One question.

SPEAKER 3: Oh, ask. Say, can I get the 3D?

CLAUDINE: I want 3D.

SPEAKER 2: It could save your life.

CLAUDINE: Yes.

SPEAKER 2: Yeah.

CLAUDINE: Can I get it?

SPEAKER 3: Sign up on the list.

CLAUDINE: Yeah Call whoever your doctor is and say, hey, does someone have 3D, that I can go get that one?

SPEAKER 2: All right. Claudine Wong. Thanks Claudine.

CLAUDINE: No problem

SPEAKER 2: KTVU is sponsoring two walks for breast cancer and making strides-- San Francisco. [INAUDIBLE] takes place Saturday, October 24th.

SPEAKER 3: Right. Also making strides, Silicon Valley, that's going to be Saturday, October 31st. You could find out more about the events and how to participate if you want to get involved. Just go to our Facebook page. It's under the Events section.