
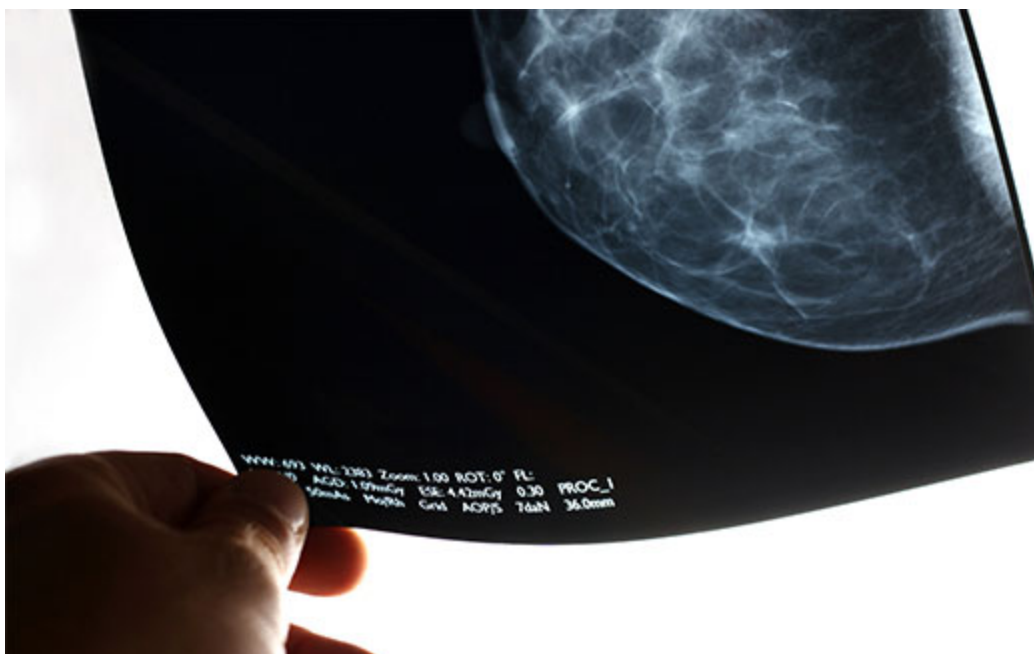


# The COVID-19 vaccine could affect your patient's mammogram

 [pages.azblue.com/Scheduling-COVID-19-shots-and-mammograms---AUG-2021.html](https://pages.azblue.com/Scheduling-COVID-19-shots-and-mammograms---AUG-2021.html)

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A common side effect of the COVID-19 vaccine is swollen lymph nodes. The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines both use mRNA technology.

Approximately 16% of people ages 18-64 and 8.4% of people over 65 have developed swollen lymph nodes within 2-4 days after receiving a dose of either vaccine.<sup>1</sup>

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**Swollen lymph nodes can be seen in mammograms and could be confused with cancer.**

Fortunately, the swelling associated with the vaccines is benign—it's a normal immune response that will resolve on its own. Potential swelling is not a reason for patients to skip getting either the vaccine or diagnostic imaging tests. Women in particular should not postpone their routine breast cancer screenings.

## Recommendations for scheduling<sup>1, 2</sup>

Talk to your patients about the recommended timing for scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations and screening exams. Ideally, women should schedule a mammogram prior to their initial vaccination. If the first dosage has already been administered, it is recommended that they wait 6-10 weeks after receiving the second vaccine dose to get their mammogram.

If it's not possible to reschedule either the vaccine or the mammogram, that is acceptable. However, having clear communication with patients is important to avoid misinterpreting any symptomatic swelling that appears in the diagnostic imaging. For a patient currently receiving treatment for breast

cancer or a breast cancer survivor, providers are advised to administer the vaccine in the arm *opposite* the side of the body where the cancer is or was located.

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<sup>1</sup>Source: [MD Anderson Cancer Center](#), “[COVID-19 and mammograms: 7 things to know](#)”

<sup>2</sup>Source: [Yale Medicine](#), “[Medical Experts Spread Word About Harmless COVID-19 Vaccine Reactions](#)”

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