



Contrast-Enhanced Mammography (CEM)

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What is Contrast-Enhanced Mammography?

Contrast-Enhanced Mammography (CEM) is an advanced breast imaging technique that combines a standard mammogram with a contrast dye. This provides additional information that can help with earlier detection, especially for women with dense breast tissue or who have had previous breast surgery.

Who is CEM suitable for?

- For the first 5 years after the diagnosis of breast cancer
- For patients where MRI is recommended but they are unable to have one
- Elevated risk:
 - There is a genetic mutation
 - Lifetime risk of breast cancer is above 20-25%
 - History of chest radiation before the age of 30
 - Strong family history
- Recommended after complex mammography and/or ultrasound findings

Why choose CEM?

Improved cancer detection in dense breasts:

CEM overcomes many of the limitations of density by focusing on vascular changes rather than tissue appearance

Helps differentiate surgical change from cancerous change:

CEM is an excellent addition for screening after breast cancer surgery as it distinguishes post-surgical scars from tumour recurrence

Comparable to MRI:

It offers a similar cancer detection rate to breast MRI but is quicker, more comfortable, and generally more accessible

Fast turnaround:

Results are often available the same day

Is the contrast safe?

Most people tolerate contrast very well, and serious reactions are uncommon. Before your examination, we will ask about any previous reactions to contrast and any known allergies to help ensure your safety.



CEM is not available if you:

- **Have breast implants.** (We can image the other breast in cases with one implant)
- **Have had past significant reactions to contrast agents**

If you are diabetic, have kidney conditions, or have an overactive thyroid you will be assessed by our medical team to ensure CEM is the right test for you. You may need a blood test prior to your appointment.

Preparing for a CEM

- Please do not apply deodorant, body oils, creams, or lotions to your breast and under arm area
- Wear clothing that separates at the waist e.g., skirt or trousers and a top. You will be asked to remove your clothing from the waist up, and we will give you a gown to wear
- Please keep hydrated by drinking 2-3 glasses of water 1 hour before your appointment. You may use the bathroom as normal.

**Plan to be with us for 45 minutes.
Your exam is likely to take around
20-30 minutes.**

What to expect at your CEM appointment

1. A mammographer will ask you safety questions and request your consent to go ahead with the examination.
2. A small cannula will be placed into a vein, preferably in your elbow crease.
3. In the mammography room, you will receive the contrast injection. You may feel a warm sensation or metallic taste in the mouth – this is normal and usually passes off quickly.
4. Two minutes after the injection is complete, the mammography exam will start. The images, positions and compression are all the same as a routine mammogram. The mammographers will guide you through the positions.
5. You will need to wait for 20 minutes after the injection and then the cannula can be removed.
6. A radiologist will review your images and discuss these with you whenever possible before you leave. A detailed medical report will be sent to your GP or surgical team.

After the exam

You can return to your normal activities straight away.

Drink plenty of water for the rest of the day.



Our Locations

- 209 Shakespeare Road, Milford
- 50 Greville Road, Pinehill

To book your appointment:

www.aucklandbreastcentre.co.nz

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