

Beating Breast Cancer with Thermography

By John C. Pittman, MD, Medical Director, Carolina Center for Integrative Medicine

The recently revised guidelines for mammograms—waiting until age 50 for the first one and then having one every two years—have caused many to wonder about this sudden change in expert consensus regarding this technology. One reason for the shift is that the radiation associated with mammography is cancer promoting. Indeed, several studies have found that regular mammography can significantly increase a woman's risk of breast cancer. Further, some oncologists have expressed concern that the physical pressure of mammography could rupture an existing tumor, causing cancer cells to metastasize. And finally, mammography often misses cancer in dense breast tissues such as those of younger women.

These risks are completely avoided with a technology called thermography. It is radiation-free and involves no direct contact with the breast. Thermascan, or breast thermography, is a safe and powerful screening tool that can help detect a potentially cancerous process long before a breast tumor actually develops and becomes a threat.

Breast thermography involves taking a picture of the breasts using a highly sensitive infrared camera that will pick up subtle differences in breast tissue temperature. Cancer starts as clusters of abnormal cells. These cells generate new blood vessels and this increased vascular activity shows up as a "hot spot" when compared to normal tissue. Studies show that thermascan can detect this abnormality six to eight years ahead of mammography - long before there is a solid mass. With the initiation of specific nutritional and other therapies, these hot spots can often be eliminated within months - reversing what could have been a pathway to breast cancer. This is true preventive medicine.

Dr. Lewis Stocks is president of Stocks Surgical Center and is the former president of Carolina Thermascan. When Dr. Stocks was completing his residency at Duke University Medical Center, he was involved in clinical trials and started the first solid tumor cancer clinic for the treatment of breast cancer patients. Dr. Stocks has been active in monitoring the evolution and advancements in thermographic technology. He says that with a normal thermascan, you can confidently rule out breast cancer in the great majority of cases.

Dr. Stocks notes that the sensitivity of thermography exceeds that of mammography, meaning that a normal thermascan has a smaller chance of missing cancer when compared to a normal mammogram. On the other hand, although an abnormal thermascan could indicate cancer, it lacks the specificity to show whether cancer actually exists. According to Dr. Stocks, this would require further testing, such as the use of ultrasound, MRI, and perhaps a tissue biopsy.

Last year, I collaborated with an epidemiologist in a careful survey of the medical literature regarding the risks and benefits of mammography. We concluded that certain groups of women may be poor candidates for mammography and would likely benefit more from thermography followed by an ultrasound. These groups include: (a) women under age 50, (b) women with dense breasts, and (c) women with BRCA mutations (who are more sensitive to low-dose radiation exposures). We recommend that women over age 50 have a thermascan every other year to alternate with mammograms.

Epidemiologic studies have found that thermography alone had an average sensitivity of 83% in detecting breast cancer versus 66% sensitivity for

mammography; however, the combination of mammography and thermography had 95% sensitivity for all breast types (whether fatty or dense). Research suggests this combination may prove to be the best strategy for breast cancer screening and detection for women over the age of 50. For women under 50, thermography appears to be a much safer way to screen for a potential cancer situation. This is the course of action we currently recommend for women who come to the Carolina Center.

Simply put, thermography enables women to be highly proactive about long-term breast health. It can help put a stop to the growth and progression of breast cancer long before it becomes a clinical reality; or treat cancer at an early stage when it is most curable. With thermography, you can take precautionary steps to ward off a problem that would only be picked up much later by mammography. By using anti-cancer nutrition, herbal therapy, and other integrative medicine strategies, you can then turn this situation around and get your body back "in the clear."

For information, please contact: Carolina Thermascan 919-571-4391. www.carolinathermascan.com.

