

# Should I Continue Having Mammograms?

For Women Age 85 Years or Older



**This is a tool to help you make this decision.**

You will need a pen/pencil to complete parts of this tool

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## What is the purpose of this tool?

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- ▶ Doctors do not know if mammograms benefit women age 85 or older.
- ▶ This tool will help you think about whether or not you want to **stop** or **continue** having mammograms.
- ▶ This tool is NOT for women who have had breast cancer or who have breast pain or symptoms.

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## Breast cancer risk factors among women aged 85+

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- ▶ The chance of getting breast cancer goes up with age. But breast cancers often grow slower in older women.
- ▶ A family history of breast cancer slightly increases the chance that a woman age 85 or older will get breast cancer.
- ▶ Having had a breast biopsy (tissue removed from the breast) slightly increases the chance that a woman age 85 or older will get breast cancer.

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## Why do women have mammograms?

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- ▶ Women have mammograms to find breast cancer early before it causes problems.
- ▶ But, mammograms do not keep you from getting breast cancer.
- ▶ Also, mammograms do not find every breast cancer.
- ▶ Experts think that a small breast cancer found on an older woman's mammogram would not have caused problems for at least 5 or 10 years. Some of the cancers may never have caused problems.

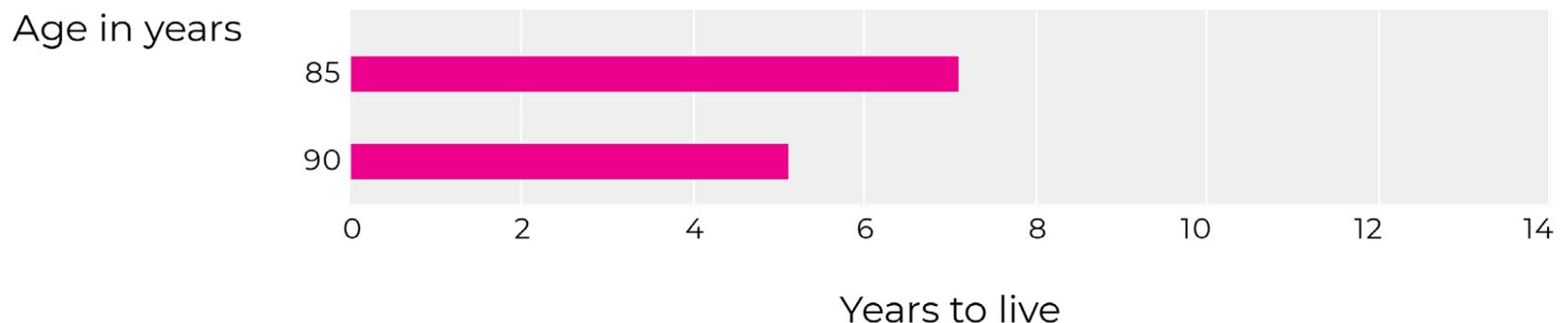
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## Am I in good enough health to have a mammogram?

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- ▶ On average an 85 year old woman will live to age 92 (7 more years)
- ▶ On average a 90 year old woman will live to age 95 (5 more years)

The graph below shows **on average** how many more years women live at different ages.



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# Your health also affects whether you may benefit from having a mammogram.

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Answer the questions below to learn more about whether you should get a mammogram based on your health.

**Answer** the 10 questions below and **add up** your points from both pages to learn more about your health.

- |   | <b>Points:</b> |
|---|----------------|
| <b>1.</b> How old are you?<br>80 – 84      2 points    write your points here _____ →<br>85+          4 points  | _____          |
| <b>2.</b> How much do you weigh?<br>If more than 130 pounds      0 points    write your points here _____ →<br>If 130 pounds or less      2 points  | _____          |
| <b>3.</b> Would you say your health is:<br>Excellent (0 points)    Very Good (0 points)    Good (1 point)    Fair (2 points)    Poor (2 points) _____ →   | _____          |
| <b>4.</b> Have you ever been told by a doctor or health professional that you had emphysema or chronic bronchitis or COPD?<br>No (0 points)    Yes (2 points)    write your points here _____ →                         | _____          |
| <b>5.</b> Have you ever been told by a doctor or health professional that you had a cancer?<br>(do not include skin cancer unless it was melanoma)<br>No (0 points)    Yes (2 points)    write your points here _____ → | _____          |
| <b>6.</b> Have you ever been told by a doctor or health professional that you had diabetes?<br>(including borderline or pre-diabetes)<br>No (0 points)    Yes (2 points)    write your points here _____ →              | _____          |

**Total from this page** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Continue on next page**

## Learning About Your Health (continued)

7. Because of a physical, mental or emotional problem, do you need help from other people with household chores or to go shopping?

No (0 points)    Yes (2 points)    write your points here \_\_\_\_\_ → \_\_\_\_\_

8. By yourself and without using any special equipment, how difficult is it for you to walk a quarter of a mile (about 3 city blocks)?

Not at all difficult (0 points)  
A little difficult to very difficult (3 points)    write your points here \_\_\_\_\_ → \_\_\_\_\_  
I can only do with a cane or walker (3 points)

9. Which best describes your cigarette use?

Never smoked or smoked less than 100 cigarettes in your life (0 points)  
Former smoker (1 point)    write your points here \_\_\_\_\_ → \_\_\_\_\_  
Current smoker (3 points)

10. During the past 12 months, how many times were you hospitalized overnight?

None (0 points)  
Once (1 point)    write your points here \_\_\_\_\_ → \_\_\_\_\_  
Twice or more (3 points)

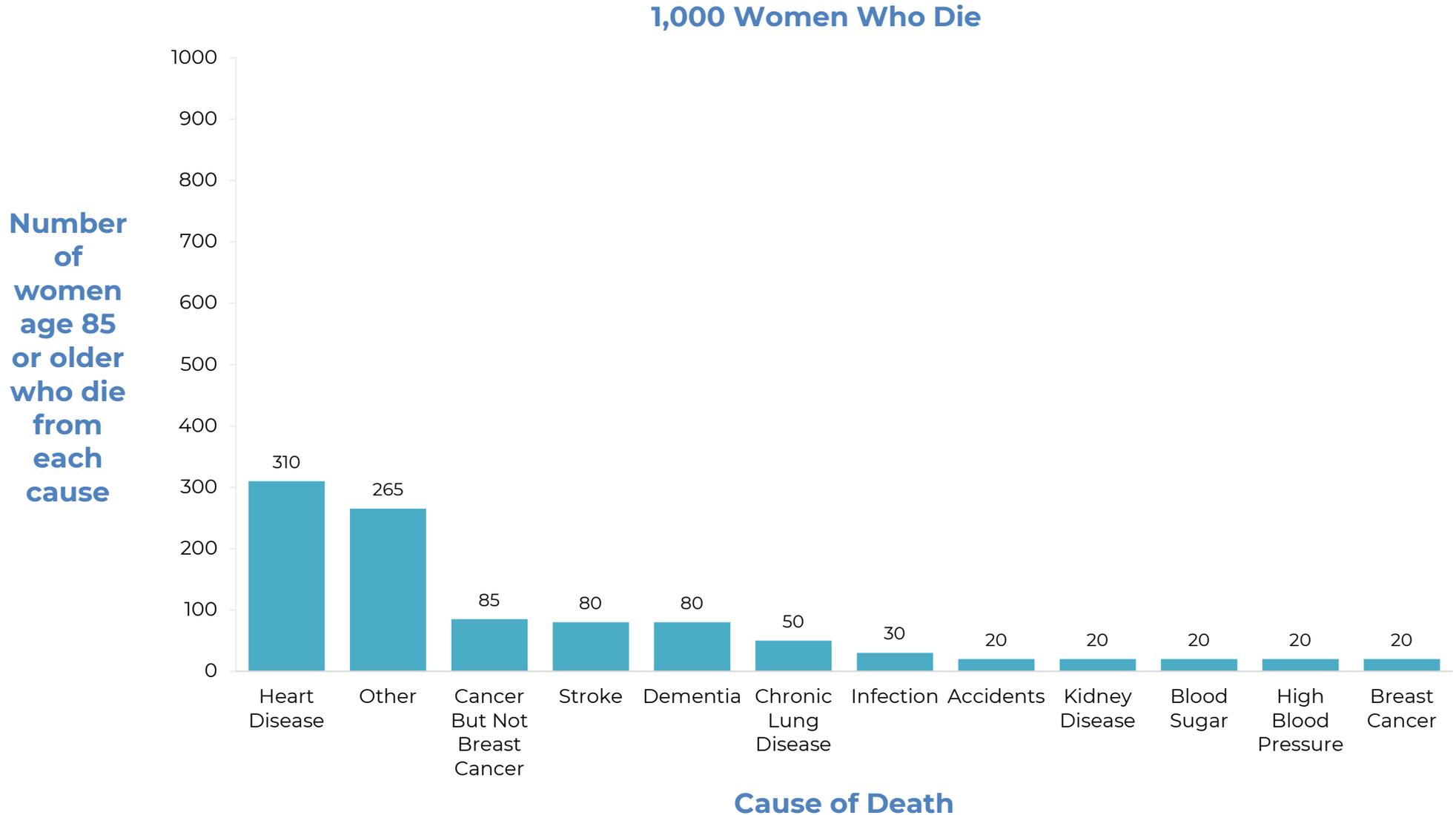
**Now add up all of your points from questions 1-10 from BOTH pages:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle your score and read the comment directly below your score to learn what it means:**



Experts generally do not recommend mammograms for women with scores greater than 6

## Below are the causes of death among women age 85 or older who die in the next 5 years



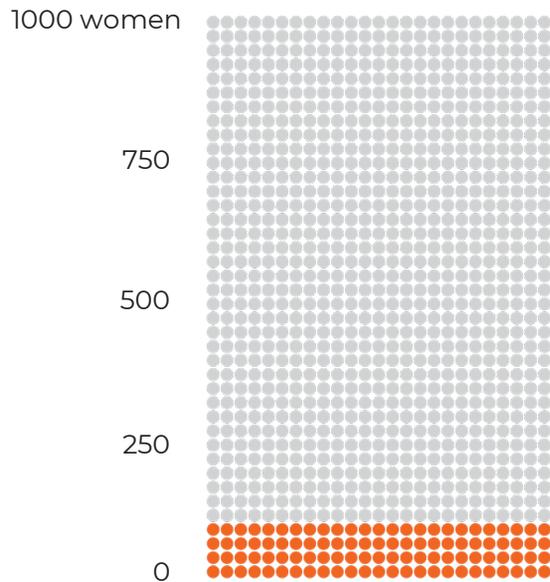
Many more women age 85 and older die of heart disease than breast cancer.

The next three pages show what happens to 1,000 women age 85 or older who CONTINUE to or DO NOT have mammograms over 5 years

**\*\*\*PLEASE READ BELOW\*\*\***

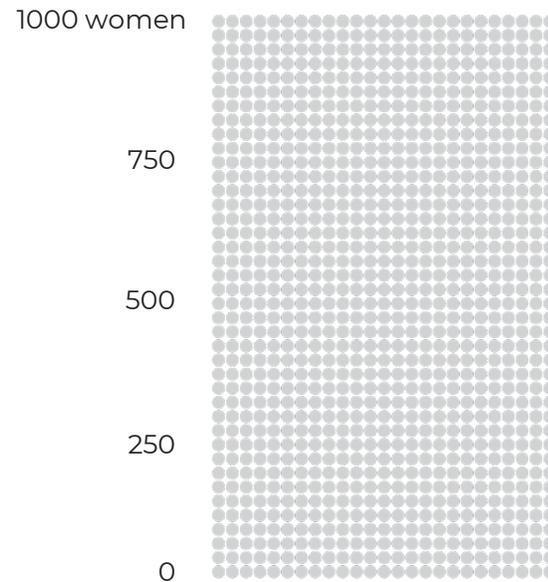
In the graphs below, each circle represents 1 woman out of 1,000

Women your age who **CONTINUE** to have mammograms



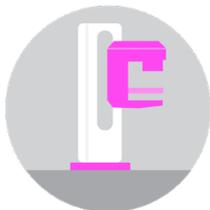
**100 False Alarms** – These women have an abnormal mammogram but additional tests do not show breast cancer. Most women find this experience causes anxiety.

Women your age who **DO NOT** have mammograms



**0 False Alarms** – 0 women have a mammogram so they do not experience a false alarm.

**Additional tests include:**



Additional Mammograms



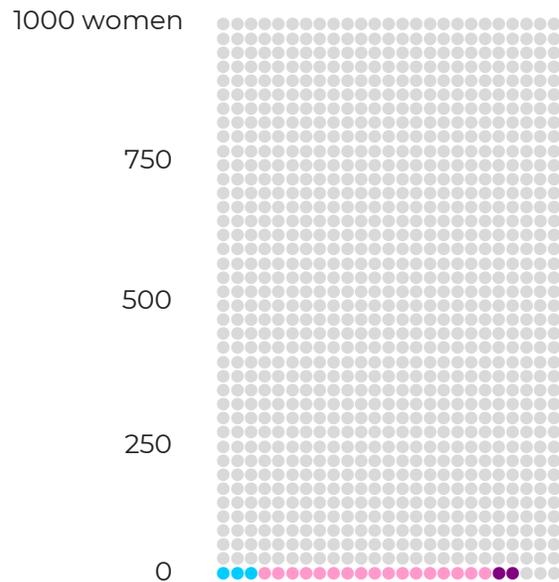
Breast Ultrasounds



Breast Biopsies

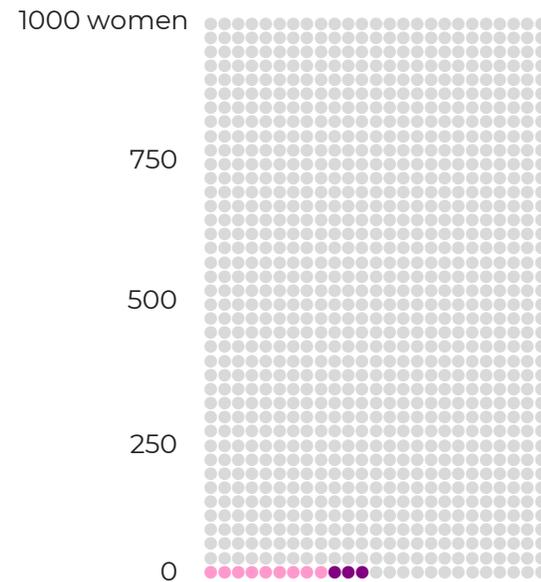
## What else happens to 1,000 women age 85 or older who CONTINUE to or DO NOT have mammograms over 5 years?

### Women your age who CONTINUE to have mammograms



- **3** are diagnosed with a pre-cancer
- **17** are diagnosed with a small breast cancer
- **2** are diagnosed with breast cancer that has spread outside the breast
- **979** are not diagnosed with breast cancer

### Women your age who DO NOT have mammograms



- **0** are diagnosed with pre-cancer
- **9** are diagnosed with a small breast cancer
- **3** are diagnosed with breast cancer that has spread outside the breast
- **988** are not diagnosed with breast cancer

### Summary:

- ▶ Women who have mammograms are more likely to be diagnosed with small breast cancers.
- ▶ Some of these breast cancers would never have caused problems in the woman's lifetime but these women get treatment.
- ▶ One more women out of 1,000 who do not get a mammogram are diagnosed with breast cancer that has spread outside the breast. These breast cancers may be harder to treat.

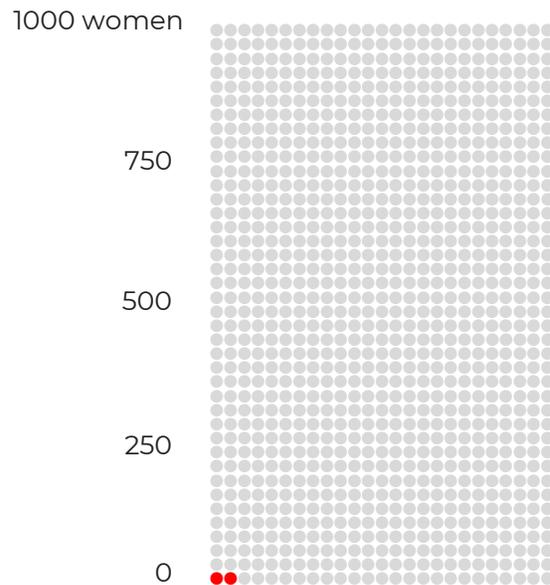
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## Below is approximately the number of women age 85 or older out of 1,000 that will die of breast cancer in the next 5 years

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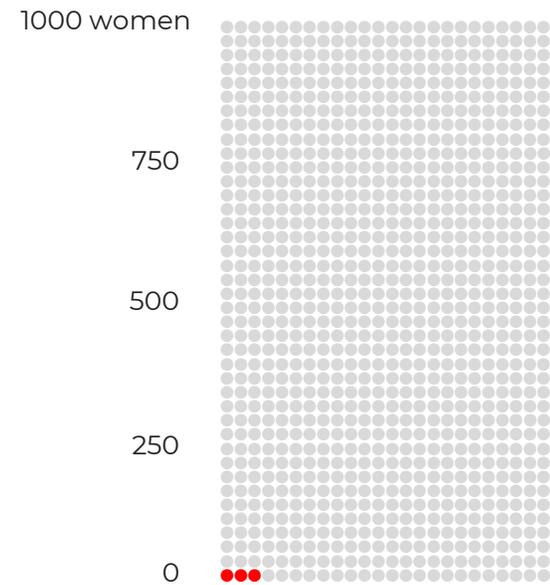
Doctors are unsure that having a mammogram will lower your chances of dying from breast cancer, some studies suggest the numbers below:

### Women your age who **CONTINUE** to have mammograms



- **2** women die of breast cancer
- **998** women do not die of breast cancer

### Women your age who **DO NOT** have mammograms



- **3** women die of breast cancer
- **997** women do not die of breast cancer

## Summary:

- ▶ 1 less woman out of 1,000 may die of breast cancer who chooses to have a mammogram.

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**Below are treatments offered to women with breast cancer.  
It is important to think about whether you would be willing to be treated  
for breast cancer before having a mammogram.**

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## Surgery

**Breast-Conserving Surgery (lumpectomy):** Only the lump of breast cancer is removed from the breast. Most older women do well after this surgery.

**Mastectomy:** Surgical removal of the breast. Some older women experience pain, infection, swelling in their arm, and even death after mastectomy.



## Pills

Hormonal therapy pills are generally taken for 5 years to prevent breast cancer from coming back. These pills may cause hot flashes, bone pain, osteoporosis, or fatigue in some women.



## Radiation Therapy

The use of high-energy radiation to get rid of cancer cells. Radiation usually requires transportation to a medical center 5 days a week for several weeks. Radiation may cause fatigue and breast pain.



## Chemotherapy

A medicine that is given at a medical center to kill cancer cells. These drugs can cause side effects like feeling tired or infections. Few women age 75 or older are treated with chemotherapy.

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## Below are some of the pros and cons of having a mammogram.

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Check ✓ the points that are important to you when deciding whether or not to have a mammogram.

Add more check marks ✓✓✓ if a point is more important to you than other points.

### Pros to having a mammogram

- \_\_\_1. A mammogram is more likely to find breast cancer when it is small, improving my chances of only needing a minor surgery.
  
- \_\_\_2. Having a mammogram may lower my chances of dying from breast cancer, but this is not certain.
  
- \_\_\_3. Having a mammogram may help me feel good about myself and my health.

### Other Pros that Matter to You

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### Cons to having a mammogram

- \_\_\_1. A mammogram may find a breast cancer that would never have caused problems or symptoms in my lifetime.
  
- \_\_\_2. Having a mammogram may increase the number of tests (additional mammograms, ultrasounds, and breast biopsies) or treatments (surgeries, radiation, chemotherapy, pills) that I get. Some of these tests or treatments can harm older women.
  
- \_\_\_3. Having a mammogram may be uncomfortable or make me feel anxious.

### Other Cons that Matter to You

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## In the next year are you going to have a mammogram?

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Please place a check mark ✓ in one of the boxes below:

- ▶ If you are sure you want a mammogram, check the box far to the **LEFT**.
- ▶ If you are sure you do **NOT** want a mammogram, check the box far to the **RIGHT**.
- ▶ If you are unsure, check a box somewhere in between.

**In the next year:**

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I Will Have a Mammogram

I am Undecided

I Will NOT Have a Mammogram

Now, you may want to talk about what you have learned from this tool with your doctor.