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A Closer Look At Breast MRI

• A CBS 2 HealthWatch Special Report

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(CBS) (NEW YORK) "I see my daughter on the Campbell's soup can," says Amy Hughes.

For the Hughes family having Sarah bring home the Olympic gold in 2002 was not their biggest victory. Amy, Sarah's mother, is a breast cancer survivor, "When I found out that I had breast cancer it was in the back of my mind that I might not survive ... I was thinking I have 6 children, who is going to take care of them."

Amy was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997 and had a lumpectomy. Every follow-up test came back clear, but just a month ago, when she went for her annual check-up, something suspicious appeared on her mammogram.

"If I didn't know what that was, I wasn't going to be sleeping that night," says Amy.

Amy's history of breast cancer puts her at high risk for recurrence. Meaning, with her, you'd want to be extra-vigilant and have the most precise, sensitive tool to find any evidence of a cancer cropping up. That technology is the breast MRI. **CBS 2's Dr. Mike Rosen** reports.

There's no radiation involved, instead it uses a huge powerful magnet that converts magnetic energy into pictures, highly detailed computerized images of the breast.

Breast MRI has actually been around in some form for the last decade. But the latest generation of these computer-generated images are incredibly accurate.

"10-15% of mammograms may miss cancers that are present but invisible on the mammogram, breast MRI scanning can close that percentage down near zero," says Dr. Mark Novick.

In a study conducted at the University of Pennsylvania, while mammography showed just a localized tumor, in more than 1/3 of patients the breast MRI detected more extensive cancer.

Mammography remains the best screening tool, breast MRI should be performed if, like Amy, you have a history of breast cancer or a family history. It's useful for breasts that are difficult to image with mammography, like dense breasts, or those with implants. And it can clear up ambiguous mammogram or sonogram results, or clarify when there's something felt, but not seen, on a mammogram.

Forty-four-year-old Laurie Jaffe had a recent scare, "It felt like a cyst, it felt like a lump, it felt like a mass."

There were no findings in Laurie's mammography and ultrasound, but she still

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felt pain in her breast and wanted the MRI. It showed nothing, "It was enough of a question in my mind that I needed to 100% put my mind at rest."

Fortunately, for Amy, it was determined that the suspicious finding was actually scar tissue from her lumpectomy surgery, "The peace of mind was unbelievable!!"

For Amy Hughes, the breast MRI has given her reassurance and the chance to once again focus on all of her gold medals, her 6 children and her husband, "There really is life after breast cancer."

Breast MRI takes thirty minutes to perform. It is widely available now and more women are being referred for the procedure.

While the \$1,500 procedure is covered by insurance, you still need a referral from your physician for it to be covered.

Interested in contacting Dr. Mark Novak? Here's his information:

Manhattan East Breast Imaging

171 East 84th Street











New York, NY 10028

Ph: 212-744-8000

[Web site](#)

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