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Medical Thermography

MA nurse provides thermography services to diagnose breast cancer and other diseases throughout New England

By Joan Fox Rose, MA, RN

Posted on: November 16, 2010

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Medical thermography is an accurate, picture-taking process that produces digital, infrared thermal images of the human body. A skin surface heat-sensing procedure it's a non-invasive, technological tool that uses a specifically designed, high-definition camera and infrared thermal imaging software.

Through the use of a scanner, infrared radiation emissions (skin surface heat) is converted into multicolored images that can be seen on a monitor and each group of reflected images is known as a thermogram.

"The color map used to visualize the emission pattern covers 16 colors over 8° Celsius, which is the normal range from warmest to coolest in the human body," said Janice Anderson, BA, RN, HNB-BC, RMT, a Byfield, MA, clinical thermographer. "The colors in the image produced by thermograms aren't as important as the thermal patterns and temperature differentials in detecting physiological changes that may be present."

According to Anderson, clinical thermograms are sensitive and reflect hot and cold thermal patterns. They're accurate because they produce real-time images down to 1:100th of a degree. A full scan - a head to toe thermogram - captures whole body infrared emissions, not just a certain part of the body.

In addition to providing thermography services at InsideOut, her MA-based thermography and holistic health center, Anderson provides thermography services at nine satellite/mobile offices throughout New England.

Unique Thermal Fingerprint

Each of us has a unique thermal fingerprint, a symmetric pattern that's accurate and remains unchanged throughout our lives. Changes in a person's normal thermal pattern show early cell changes may have occurred. Even slight skin temperature elevations can have an affect the body's physiology, so continued monitoring through thermogram studies is recommended.¹

Among its uses, medical thermography is used to visualize nerve inflammation, infection, circulatory, muscular and skeletal system changes.² Thermography provides information about acute and chronic health conditions and makes distinctions between aggravated and residual tissue injury and are used for certain sports injuries.

Thermograms can visualize pain identity and residual pain following surgery; thermograms monitor postsurgical healing.

Breast Thermography



THE INSIDE SCOOP: Janice Anderson, BA, RN, HNB-BC, RMT, a Byfield, MA, clinical thermographer owns InsideOut, a thermography and holistic health center. She provides thermography services at nine satellite/mobile offices throughout New England. *photo courtesy Janice Anderson*

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Medical thermography has been approved by the FDA for almost 30 years and is an adjunctive diagnostic breast cancer screening procedure, and true method of early breast cancer detection, Anderson explained.

"Only a biopsy will definitely diagnose a malignancy," she added.

A nationally certified holistic health nurse who specializes in women's health issues, Anderson said breast thermography is particularly helpful in the assessment and monitoring of breast health, especially for high risk, young women, those with augmentation and single or bilateral mastectomy patients. Thermograms scan and image the whole breast, chest wall and axilla to visualize changes in physiology that occur years before anatomical changes happen.

Thermography is an excellent tool to document changes that may occur in women's bodies as the environment becomes more toxic from pollution and environmental toxins.

"Thermography can identify an area of concern which clinical testing probably will not be able to validate as it's too early in the pathology process," Anderson said. "You can change your physiology with lifestyle changes; it is much easier to change your body's function, as opposed to changing your body's structure which often requires surgical intervention.

"Consistently positive thermograms are the single most predictive factor to determine future breast health/pathology concerns, even more than a first-degree relative who has had breast cancer."

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