

To help reduce your risk of breast cancer:

- maintain a healthy body weight – strive to keep your waistline to less than 80 cm
- eat well – a healthy diet will help you maintain a healthy body weight
- limit your alcohol intake – or better still, avoid it altogether
- keep active – exercise for 30 to 60 minutes each day.

Adopting a healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk.

Breast cancer screening

In Australia, all women aged 50 to 74 are invited to have a free screening mammogram (breast x-ray) at BreastScreen every two years.

It is the best way to find breast cancer before it can be felt or symptoms develop.

Women aged in their 40s and over 74 are outside BreastScreen's target age range, but they are still eligible for free screening mammograms every two years.

A mammogram is done in private with a female radiographer and only takes a few minutes. You can take a friend or family member with you if it makes you feel more comfortable.

Making a decision about breast cancer screening

It is recommended that women aged 50 to 74, without breast symptoms or changes, participate in the BreastScreen program.

Women should make an informed, personal choice about participating. If you are unsure about your risk of breast cancer, or if breast screening is right for you, you should speak to your doctor.

Benefits of breast cancer screening

- It is the best early detection tool we have to reduce deaths from breast cancer.
- Finding breast cancer early often means that the breast cancer is small. It is less likely to have spread to other parts of the body and it can be more effectively treated.

Limitations of breast cancer screening

- Screening mammograms are not always 100% accurate. This means that for a small number of women the mammogram may not find a breast cancer that is present.
- Some breast cancers can develop between mammograms, which is why being breast aware is so important.
- Some women may need further testing or treatment for changes which are not due to breast cancer.

Booking an appointment

For more information or to make a booking, call BreastScreen on 13 20 50 or visit www.breastscreen.org.au.

For cancer information and support call Cancer Council on **13 11 20** or visit cancervic.org.au



Finding breast cancer early.

Every woman's guide to breast health

More women survive breast cancer today thanks to early detection and better treatments.

However, it is still the most common cancer among Australian women, with about 16,000 women diagnosed each year, so it is important to be breast aware.

Know what's normal for you

It's important to be familiar with the look and feel of your breasts and to know what's normal for you.

That way you are more likely to notice any unusual changes which could be, but are not always, a sign of breast cancer.

There is no right or wrong way to examine your breasts – it's important to find a way that works for you. These tips may help:

- Use a mirror to get to know the usual look and shape of your breasts.
- Become familiar with how your breasts feel at different times of the month. You might find this easiest in the shower or bath, lying in bed, or getting dressed.
- Feel all the breast tissue, from the collarbone to below the bra line, and under the armpit.
- Use the pads of your fingers to feel near the surface and deeper in the breast.

Women of all ages should be familiar with their breasts, but it becomes more important as you get older because the risk of breast cancer increases with age.

Become familiar with the look and feel of your breasts.

Changes to look for

Many breast cancers are found by a woman or her doctor after noticing a change in the breast. See your doctor straight away if you feel or see any of the following:

- A lump, lumpiness or thickening in the breast or armpit.
- Changes in the skin of the breast – dimpling, puckering or redness.
- Changes in the nipple – pointing in rather than out (unless it has always been this way), a change in direction or an unusual discharge.
- An area that feels different from the rest.
- Unusual pain.

Nine out of 10 breast changes are not breast cancer; however, it is important to have any changes checked out straight away by your doctor.

Breast cancer risk

The most important risk factors for breast cancer are being a woman and getting older.

Most breast cancers occur in women over 50 years of age. While breast cancer is less common in women younger than 40, it is important for all women to be breast aware.

Other factors which increase your risk include:

- having a mother, sister or daughter who have had breast or ovarian cancer, particularly before the age of 50
- if you have had breast or ovarian cancer in the past.