



Fact Sheet - General Information (available in other languages)

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a group of abnormal cells which continues to grow and multiply. Eventually these cells may form a lump in the breast. If the cancer is not removed or controlled the cancer cells can spread into other parts of the body and may eventually cause death.

Am I at risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer?

One in every 8 Australian women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

The most important risk factor for breast cancer is being a woman aged 50 years or over.

What is a screening mammogram?

A screening mammogram is a low dose X-ray of a woman's breast in a woman who otherwise has no breast abnormality or change. Screening mammograms detect 90% of breast cancer and can find a breast cancer that is too small to feel. **Early detection is your best protection.** Finding a cancer at this early stage improves the chance of successful treatment.

How often should I attend a screening?

Regular two yearly screening mammograms are recommended for women 50 years or over. However, in some circumstances yearly screening mammograms may be recommended.

Is a screening mammogram free?

BreastScreen WA is government funded to provide a **FREE** screening mammogram every two years to women aged 50 to 69 years. Women 40 to 49 and over 70 years can have a free screening mammogram on request at BreastScreen WA. A screening mammogram is **NOT** available to women under 40 years at BreastScreen WA.

Where can I have a screening mammogram?

BreastScreen WA has eight metropolitan screening services located in Cannington, Fremantle, Joondalup, Midland, Mirrabooka, Padbury, Perth City and Rockingham and four mobile services which visit country towns every two years.

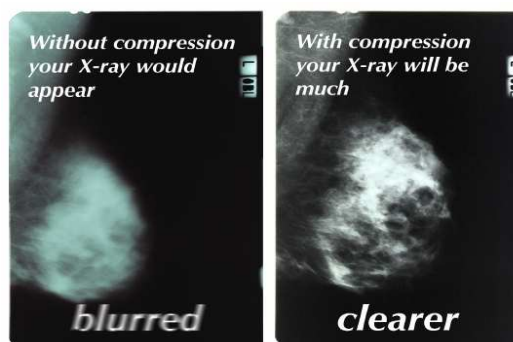
What happens when I visit BreastScreen WA?

When you attend a BreastScreen WA screening service it is recommended to **wear a two piece outfit, such as a skirt or trousers and shirt and also avoid using talcum powder or deodorant.** When you arrive at BreastScreen WA the following process will take place:

1. You will be welcomed and asked to fill in personal information and consent forms.
2. Once you have changed into a gown, a female radiographer will take you into the X-ray room and ask you some questions. She will then take two X-rays of each breast.
3. You will be asked to wait until the radiographer has checked the X-rays for technical quality.
4. The radiographer will let you know when the examination is complete and you are able to leave.
5. Your X-rays are reviewed by at least two specially trained doctors and results sent to you within 14 working days.
6. It is not uncommon for women to be called back for further X-rays. If this is necessary a Breast Assessment Nurse from BreastScreen WA will phone to discuss this with you.

How is a screening mammogram performed?

The breast is carefully positioned on the X-ray machine and compressed for a few seconds while the X-ray is taken. Two X-rays are taken of each breast, one from the top and one from the side. Compression may be tight and uncomfortable but should not be painful, however compression is important so that the clearest possible picture can be taken (refer to right-hand image below) and minimal amount of radiation is used.



Why should I attend a screening mammogram?

Early detection is your best protection.

A screening mammogram may save your life

An appointment can be made by ringing 13 20 50.

If you need a free interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) first on 13 14 50, and ask to be connected to the BreastScreen WA central booking service on 13 20 50.

Group bookings

Group bookings are available for those women who would prefer to attend as a group. For example, women who speak the same language, women in clubs or associations or friends may find it more comfortable to book as a group. For further enquiries about group bookings please phone 13 20 50.

Free resources

There are a number of free information pamphlets available to you about breast screening, breast cancer, women with a family history of breast cancer, implants, breast pain, women with disabilities and more.

Resources available in other languages

'For Me and My Family' (video) is available in Arabic, Cantonese, Croatian, English, Greek, Italian, Khmer, Macedonian, Russian, Polish, Serbian, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish, and Vietnamese.

This 'General Information - Fact Sheet' is available in English, Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Burmese, Chinese, Croatian, Dari, Farsi, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Macedonian, Malay, Maltese, Netherlandic, Khmer, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Thai, Tigrigna and Vietnamese.

The 'After your screening mammogram - What next?' Fact Sheet is available in English, Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Croatian, Dari, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Macedonian, Malay, Polish, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish and Vietnamese.

'Screening Mammography for Women with a Family History of Breast Cancer' is available in English, Bosnian, Chinese, Dari, Malay, Serbian and Vietnamese.

To order resources, please phone 9323 6762 or e-mail breastscreenwa@health.wa.gov.au

Helping Deliver a Healthy WA