

# Information on screening mammography for women under 40 years of age.

## Thank you for your interest in the BreastScreen WA screening mammography service.

The following information is provided to explain why women under 40 years are not eligible for screening mammograms at this stage.

- The risk of developing breast cancer increases with age and the majority of women diagnosed with breast cancer are over 50 years of age.
- The breast tissue of younger women tends to be more dense than the tissue of older women. Dense tissue can show up as white areas on the X-ray. Breast cancers also show up as white areas on X-rays. This means that screening mammograms are frequently less accurate at finding breast cancer in younger women.
- As yet, research has not provided enough evidence that screening mammography is effective in reducing breast cancer deaths for women under 40 years of age.
- BreastScreen WA has a licence from the Radiological Council to screen only those women who are 40 years or older.



## What if I am experiencing a breast symptom?

BreastScreen WA is a screening mammography service designed specifically for women with no breast symptoms. Women of all ages should see their GP immediately if they notice any unusual changes in their breasts. Your GP will refer you for further investigation relevant to your symptoms.

## What if I have a family history of breast cancer?

The risk of developing breast cancer will depend on a number of factors including:

- How many close relatives have been diagnosed with breast cancer (mother, sister, daughter, father, son, brother).
- The age when breast cancer was found (greater risk if your relative was under 50 years of age).
- How closely they are related (sister rather than niece or cousin).
- When there is breast cancer in both breasts, male breast cancer, or breast and ovarian cancer in the family.

## Is there anything I can do now?

We encourage you to discuss any issues you may have with your GP and remember to:

## Be aware of the normal look and feel of your breasts

- Look in the mirror at your breasts and feel for any changes in your breasts.
- See your GP promptly if you notice any new changes in your breasts.
- Ask your GP to check your breasts regularly.

**BreastScreen**  
**AUSTRALIA**

A joint Commonwealth/State and Territory Program

*BreastScreen*  
**WA**  
WA's only accredited screening service



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[www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au)

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