

Screening mammography for women with implants

BreastScreen WA will phone you to discuss the best course of action. She will help to organise for these tests to be done either at a BreastScreen WA Breast Assessment Centre or through your GP.

Will I be told if any problems are found with my implant?

Not all leaks and ruptures can be seen on a mammogram. If a leak or rupture is found, BreastScreen WA will tell you. You will be advised to consult with your doctor for further assessment. Implant problems will not be assessed by BreastScreen WA.

If I have breast implants, am I more likely to develop breast cancer?

At present there is no evidence that women who have breast implants are more likely to develop breast cancer. However, studies have not yet provided a definite answer to this question.


Do I need to tell BreastScreen WA that I have implants?

Yes. It is important BreastScreen WA knows if you have implants as special X-ray techniques will be used and more X-rays will be taken. Therefore, tell the call centre person when making an appointment, as extra time will be needed. Also tell the screening centre staff when you arrive for your screening mammogram appointment.

Phone 13 20 50 for a FREE screening mammogram appointment (for the cost of a local call).

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

NOTE:

-  Wheelchair access is available at all metropolitan clinics.
- Evening and Saturday morning appointments are available at most metropolitan clinics.

What else should I do?

Be breast aware:

- Get to know your breasts and what is normal for you. Look in the mirror at your breasts and feel your breasts from time to time.
- If you notice any unusual changes in your breasts such as lumps, nipple discharge, or persistent new breast pain, even if your last screening mammogram was normal, please see your GP promptly.
- Ask your GP to check your breasts regularly.

Do you have any questions?

Contact your GP or phone:

BreastScreen WA

13 20 50 for appointments
(08) 9323 6700 for information or
1800 800 033 toll-free for country women
TTY 1800 241 708

The Cancer Council WA

(08) 9212 4333
13 11 20 Cancer Council Helpline

Women's Health Services

(08) 9227 8122
1800 998 399 toll-free from country

Family Planning WA (FPWA)

(08) 9227 6178
1800 198 205 toll-free from country

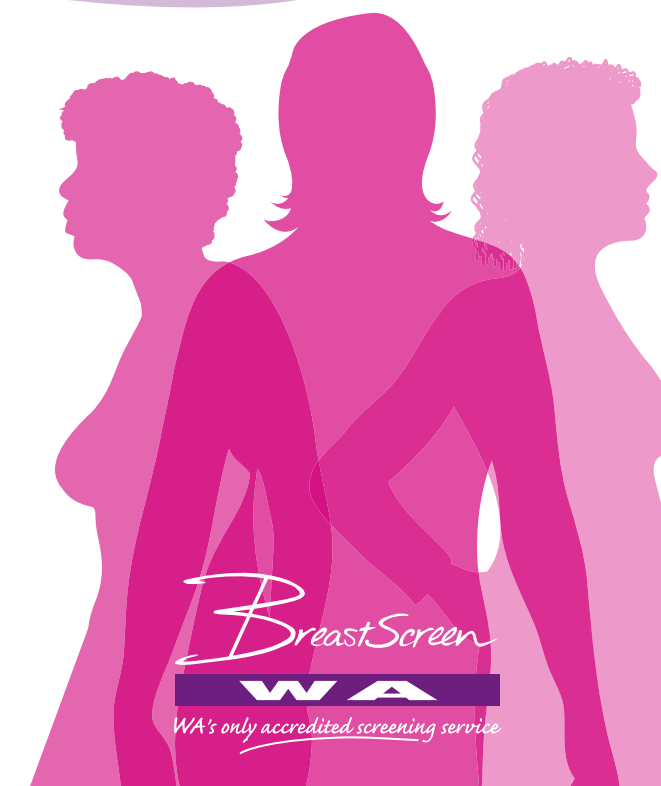
Women's Health Centres

There are many Women's Health Centres located around Western Australia. Check your local directory for one near you.



www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au

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Helping Deliver a Healthy WA

13 20 50

Women 50 years or over have a **FREE screening mammogram every two years.**

BreastScreen WA provides **FREE screening mammograms to women 40 years or over with no breast symptoms, and specifically targets women aged 50 to 69 years.**

If you have breast implants, this brochure may answer some of your questions about having a screening mammogram.

What is a breast implant?

Breast implants (also called breast prostheses) are inserted to enlarge or change the shape of the breasts or to reconstruct the breast following surgery for breast cancer. A breast implant has a shell or envelope made of silicone. The shell is filled with either silicone gel or saline (salt) fluid or a combination of both. Breast implants are inserted under a general anaesthetic by a surgeon. They are placed behind the breast tissue either in front of or behind the chest muscles.

Can women with breast implants have a mammogram at BreastScreen WA?

Yes. Most women who have breast implants can have regular screening mammograms every two years. Before making an appointment you may wish to discuss with your GP or breast specialist whether screening mammography is suitable for you.

Can women with concerns about their breast implants come to BreastScreen WA to assess the problem?

No. Women who notice a problem with their breast implants should see their doctor as soon as possible. BreastScreen WA was established to detect early breast cancer. It is not designed to provide a diagnostic service for suspected implant problems.



Are mammograms safe for women with implants?

Mammograms are generally safe for women with breast implants. However, it is important that women are aware of the risks before deciding to attend BreastScreen WA:

■ Ruptures and leaks

There is an extremely small chance that the pressure placed on the implant during the mammogram process could cause the implants to rupture or break.

In women who have implants which have already ruptured or started to leak, it is possible having a mammogram could increase the amount of silicone or saline spreading into the breast tissue.

■ 'Bleeding'

In some women with implants, very small amounts of silicone or saline pass through the pores of the implant shell. This is sometimes called 'bleeding' of the implant. At present it is not known whether mammography increases 'bleeding' of implants.

■ Change in shape

Some women who have implants develop unusually hard breasts. This is known as capsular contracture. It occurs because the scar tissue surrounding the implant tightens. It is possible that the pressure of the mammogram could cause the scar tissue to crack. If this occurs, your breasts may have a different shape and softer texture afterwards. However, it cannot be guaranteed that both breasts will be affected equally.

■ Radiation exposure

Screening mammograms use a very low dose of radiation and for most women, the benefits of having regular screening mammograms outweigh any possible risk from radiation exposure. Screening mammography for women with breast implants often requires more X-rays to be taken. This means that you will get slightly more radiation than if you did not have implants.

Will having a screening mammogram be painful?

The special techniques needed to X-ray some women with breast implants may make the mammogram a little more uncomfortable than usual. Please tell the radiographer if you feel it is too uncomfortable.

Are screening mammograms effective for women with implants?

Screening mammograms are not 100% effective. Mammograms are less effective for some women with implants because the implant can obscure some of the breast tissue making it more difficult to find small breast cancers.

When will I get my results?

The results of your screening mammogram will be sent to you within two weeks. Results are also sent to your GP unless you have requested otherwise.

In a small number of women further tests will be needed before cancer can be ruled out. If this is necessary a Breast Assessment Nurse from