



Government of Western Australia  
North Metropolitan Health Service



# BreastScreen WA - Information for GPs

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Australian women.

BreastScreen WA is Western Australia's only accredited FREE screening mammography and assessment service.

## Objective

The objective of the screening program is to reduce morbidity and mortality from breast cancer.

## The role of the GP

- Research demonstrates your encouragement will increase the likelihood of women attending a screening mammogram. Although a doctor's referral is not essential, General Practitioners are valued by BreastScreen WA as having a fundamental role in encouraging women to have a screening mammogram and in the management of screen detected breast lesions.
- Women are asked to nominate a GP that their results can be sent to.

## Who can have a screening mammogram?

- BreastScreen WA specifically targets asymptomatic women aged 50-74 years as studies show if 70% of women in this age group participate in screening, a statistically significant reduction in mortality from breast cancer can be achieved compared to women who are not screened.
- Women aged 40-49 years can attend but there is less proven benefit for screening women in this age group.
- Women aged 75 years and over are welcome to attend but are not re-invited. BreastScreen WA recommend women in this age group consult with their health care providers whether to continue screening mammography.
- Screening mammography is for asymptomatic women. Women with any breast symptoms (eg. breast lumps, nipple discharge) should be thoroughly assessed and investigated elsewhere. Referral to a screening service is inappropriate and may cause unnecessary delay in diagnosis and anxiety for women. A negative mammogram does not alter the necessity for a full clinical assessment and investigation of a breast symptom.

## How often should women have a screening mammogram?

- Women will be re-invited every two years until age 74 years. If women 75 years and over want to have a screening mammogram, they are welcome to phone 13 20 50 to make an appointment.
- Women with a personal or significant family history of breast cancer will be invited annually. Please see [www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au) for more information.

## Booking a mammogram

Women aged 40 and over may book online [www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au) or phone **13 20 50**

Medical Director **GP referral template** available at:

<http://www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au/Health-Professionals/GP-Referral-to-BreastScreen-WA>

## What happens when a woman has an abnormal mammogram?

- An appointment for further assessment is discussed by a BreastScreen WA staff member over the phone.
- Women with an abnormality detected by screening will be invited for further investigation at a BreastScreen WA Breast Assessment Centre. Her GP is notified of this appointment in writing. This may include further diagnostic mammographic views, ultrasound, fine needle aspirations and core biopsy. Localisation techniques (eg ultrasound, stereotactic) may be required for tissue sampling as the majority of these lesions are radiologically detected and are usually not palpable. Women may choose to be referred to her GP to be assessed privately at any time. (Please note that you will need to contact one of our BreastScreen WA staff on 9323 6710 / 6726 for a mammogram report and the turn around is approximately 5 working days).
- BreastScreen WA provides assessment through four Breast Assessment Centres by a multi-disciplinary team, up to the point of a definitive diagnosis. If a breast cancer is diagnosed, women are referred back to their GP to be managed through the usual public or private health care services.
- The Radiologist, Surgeon, Pathologist, Radiographer, Breast Physician and Breast Assessment Nurse work together in a multidisciplinary team to provide a diagnosis as quickly as possible, preferably on the same day. Counselling for a woman and/or her family is available.
- Where no evidence of breast cancer is detected after further investigation, the results are discussed with the woman and she receives a written report. Result letters are sent to her GP.

## Will GPs be informed of results?

- Women are encouraged to involve their nominated GPs to discuss options for management and treatment of breast cancer.
- If breast cancer is diagnosed, the woman's GP is advised in writing or contacted by phone if possible by the Breast Assessment Centre's Breast Physician on the day.
- Copies of mammograms and reports are available for GPs on request.
- BreastScreen WA may contact GPs about the results of investigations of women who elect to have their assessment in the private sector. This data is used to assist with quality assurance of the program's cancer detection rates.

## BreastScreen WA Screening Clinics

**Permanent clinic locations:** Bunbury, Cannington, Cockburn, David Jones Rose Clinic, Mandurah, Midland, Mirrabooka, Padbury, Perth City, Rockingham and Wanneroo.

**Rural locations:** Four mobile BreastScreen WA services visit country towns every two years. Some towns are visited annually.

Check [www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au/Breast-screening/Rural-and-remote-women](http://www.breastscreen.health.wa.gov.au/Breast-screening/Rural-and-remote-women) for mobile screening unit visit dates.

## Breast Assessment Centres

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| • Bunbury Screening and Assessment Service               | Tel: (08) 9792 2400 |
| • Fiona Stanley Hospital Breast Assessment Centre        | Tel: (08) 6152 4125 |
| • Royal Perth Hospital Breast Assessment Clinic          | Tel: (08) 9224 2723 |
| • Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Breast Assessment Centre | Tel: (08) 6457 4590 |

## Further Information contact

- Medical Director at BreastScreen WA- phone (08) 9323 6701 or freecall 1800 800 033 (country calls)
- GP Liaison Officer- phone (08) 9323 6705 or freecall 1800 800 033 (country calls)

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

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National Relay Service [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)