



*for  
Pacific women*



Early detection is your **best** protection

## BreastScreen Aotearoa (BSA)

- aims to reduce the number of women who die from breast cancer
- offers free mammograms (breast x-rays) every two years to women aged 45-69 years to check for early breast cancer
- is a FREE national programme.

# What are your chances of getting breast cancer?

The risk of breast cancer increases with age.

Most women who get breast cancer:

- are over 50 years old
- have no relatives with the disease.



# About mammograms

Mammograms are breast X-rays. Mammograms:

- can show changes in the breast tissue before anything can be seen or felt
- are safe because they use very small amounts of radiation
- cannot prevent you from getting breast cancer
- can prevent you from dying of breast cancer.

However mammograms are not perfect.

Occasionally a mammogram might show something wrong when all is well (a false positive result), or it might not pick up a cancer that is there (a false negative result). It is more difficult to find a cancer in women who:

- are under 50 years old
- have not reached menopause
- have dense breast tissue

Despite this, mammograms are still the best way of finding early breast cancer. Early detection and treatment means a better chance of a successful outcome.

# On the day you have your mammogram

- Don't use talcum powder, moisturisers or deodorant – they make the x-ray hard to read.
- Wear a two piece outfit (eg trousers or skirt and top) so you can undress your top half easily.
- You will be offered a gown to wear or you can use your own shirt to cover your top half, if you wish.
- Please discuss any concerns with the medical radiation technologist or MRT.
- Having your mammogram should take around 30 minutes.

When you have your mammogram:

- a MRT will place each breast in turn between two plates
- the breasts are held firmly in the plates for a few seconds as the x-rays are taken
- you may find it uncomfortable, and some women find it embarrassing or painful
- your mammogram will be checked later by two radiologists (x-ray doctors).

You can bring a support person with you when you come for your mammogram. Your privacy will be respected at all times.

# Getting your results

You (and your doctor if you wish) should get your results within two weeks.

- Most women have normal results and will be asked to return in two years.
- A small number of women will be asked to return for further checking.
- Checking (or assessment) may mean more breast x-rays, an ultra sound or a biopsy (a small sample of breast tissue is checked). This is all free.
- Most women who return for checking will not have breast cancer.
- The few women who do have breast cancer will be treated by a specialist team.

# Your rights

Your rights are protected by the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights and the Health Information Privacy Code.

*You may ask for more information about your rights at any BSA centre.*

If you are unhappy with the service you can make a complaint to Breast Screen Aotearoa or the Health and Disability Commission.



# Important

*Women of any age who feel or notice anything unusual about their breasts should see their doctor.*

This may include:

- a new lump or thickening
- a change in breast shape or size
- unusual breast pain
- puckering or dimpling of the skin
- any new change in one nipple  
e.g. discharge or turned in nipple
- a rash or reddening of the skin in one breast.

# Having mammograms with BreastScreen Aotearoa (BSA)

BSA is for women:

- aged 45-69
- with no symptoms of breast cancer
- who have not had a mammogram in the last 12 months
- who are not pregnant or breastfeeding.

*You need to **enrol** to be part of the BSA programme. To enrol, or check if you are already enrolled, freephone BSA on **0800 270 200***



*Remember: Early detection of breast cancer means a very good chance of successful treatment.*

There are BreastScreen Aotearoa centres and mobile screening units throughout New Zealand. Women with special needs are welcome.

To find your nearest BSA facility, to enrol or book your appointment, or discuss any special needs ring freephone 0800 270 200 or contact:

- your Pacific health providers
- your own doctor or nurse
- a local women's centre or health centre
- your local Cancer Society
- or visit [www.breastscreen.org.nz](http://www.breastscreen.org.nz)

