


Having more tests after a mammogram

www.timetoscreen.nz



BreastScreen
Aotearoa



You have been asked to come to a clinic for more tests because something on your mammogram looks unusual and needs checking.

Most women who come for more tests will not have breast cancer.

When 100 women have a mammogram through BreastScreen Aotearoa, about five women are asked back for more tests because something looks unusual. Four out of these five women will not have breast cancer and one woman will be diagnosed with breast cancer.

During your tests, our team will check anything on your mammogram that looks unusual or needs further investigation. Most of the time, we will find that all is well and you do not have breast cancer.

If you feel anxious before or after the day of your appointment it may help to talk with someone supportive. This may be your husband, partner, whānau member or a friend. You can also talk to a breast nurse at BreastScreen Aotearoa. Your doctor will have the results of your mammogram and you may wish to talk over having more tests with them. However, visits to the doctor are not funded as part of the free breast screening service.



FREEPHONE

0800 270 200

What tests do you need?

Your mammogram has already identified something unusual that needs more checking. Our team will explain the type of tests that are best for you. This could mean having one or more of these tests:

- Another mammogram. More mammogram pictures are taken to magnify an area or look at it from a different angle to get more information on the area that needs checking.
- An ultrasound scan. An ultrasound device is passed over the skin of the breast and uses sound waves to produce a picture of the inside of your breast. Ultrasound pictures provide more information about the area that needs checking, especially to tell the difference between cysts and other lumps. Not all conditions can be investigated using ultrasound.
- A clinical breast examination by a doctor or nurse.
- A needle biopsy. After a local anaesthetic is given to numb the breast, a small amount of breast tissue is removed using a needle. A needle biopsy is carried out using ultrasound or X-ray guidance to show where the unusual or abnormal tissue is. The tissue sample is examined by a pathologist.

A needle biopsy can usually be done on the same day as other tests but your results will not be available immediately.

Following a needle biopsy, a small number of women are asked to come back for a surgical biopsy on another day as this requires a general anaesthetic.

Results

Where possible you will be given some early results at the end of your visit, or you will be told when to expect them. It will take a few weeks for your full results to be confirmed. If a biopsy is done, you will usually be asked to come back to get your full results. Your results will also be sent to your doctor if you have given your permission for this to happen. You are able to get your biopsy result from your doctor if you live far away from the clinic but this visit is not funded as part of the free breast screening service.

If the tests show you have breast cancer, the BreastScreen Aotearoa team or your doctor will help you choose a specialist who can provide treatment.

Most women who return for more tests will not have cancer. For those few who do, finding and treating breast cancer early means a very good chance of successful treatment.



How should I prepare for the tests?

You are welcome to bring a support person with you, for example, your husband, partner, friend, or whānau member (they will be asked to leave the room when a mammogram is taken to avoid any unnecessary radiation exposure).

- On the day of your assessment, please do not use talcum powder, creams or deodorants as these products make it harder to see things on your mammograms.
- Wear a top that is easy to take off as you will need to undress from the waist up.
- You may have questions you want to ask. You may find it useful to write these down and bring them with you to the assessment clinic. Please feel free to ask questions.

The BreastScreen Aotearoa team will do their best to make your assessment as comfortable as possible. Please let us know if we can help in any way.

How long will the tests take?

For some women, the tests may only take an hour, for others it may be half a day or longer. If you need a biopsy this will usually be performed in the afternoon. You may need to plan to be at the clinic for a whole day. If you live a long distance from the clinic you may need to stay overnight. You can talk about this with the nurse who phones you to arrange the tests.

Your rights

Your rights are protected by the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights. BreastScreen Aotearoa has a legal obligation under the Health Information Privacy Code. You will receive more detail about the privacy of your information when you come to your assessment.

More information

If you need further information or would like to talk to someone about your assessment – either before or after you visit to the clinic, contact your nearest BreastScreen Aotearoa clinic, phone 0800 270 200 or visit www.breastscreen.govt.nz

Quality of BreastScreen Aotearoa services

All BreastScreen Aotearoa facilities have to meet national quality standards, which are independently checked.

This resource is available from www.healthed.govt.nz or the Authorised Provider at your local District Health Board.

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