



BreastScreen
Aotearoa



Your breast screening journey

0800 270 200 | [TimeToBreastScreen.nz](https://www.timetobreastscreen.nz) |

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Brave & beautiful

There's beauty in the way our Pacific sisters serve.

They're the first to arrive and the last to leave. Whether it's at church, home, or at work, our Pacific sisters are always holding us up and keeping everything together. They move through our world with strength, wisdom, and deep aloha. They show up, they show care, and they put others first.

But in looking after everyone else, how often do they get the chance to look after themselves?

Getting a breast screen may seem like a small thing, but it's not. It's a brave act. A beautiful one. It's a decision to protect your own wellbeing, to honour your future, and to lead by example.

Finding breast cancer early, when it is small means it's easier to treat and you're more likely to survive.

By choosing to have a breast screen, our Pacific sisters are doing something powerful. For their health, their family, their community, and their future.

This is what strength looks like.
This is what brave and beautiful means.
This is Vāine Toa.



What is breast screening?

Breast screening means having a mammogram – a type of x-ray that helps find cancer early, when it's easier to treat. BreastScreen Aotearoa offers free mammograms every two years for women aged 45 to 69.

The age range for free breast screening is being extended for women aged 70 to 74. Go to **TimeToBreastScreen.nz** for more information.

Early detection is best

Regular two-yearly mammograms improve outcomes by allowing early detection of cancer. For women of all ages, it is important to take the time to learn the normal look and feel of your breasts. If you notice any changes, see your doctor straight away.

Some signs and symptoms to check for may include:

- a new lump in the breast or armpit
- changes to the breast shape or size
- changes to the skin of the breast such as dimpling, puckering, or thickening
- changes in the nipple, such as turning inwards, ulcers, or a new itch
- nipple discharge or bleeding
- persistent redness
- pain in the breast that does not go away.

If you notice any of these, don't wait for your next mammogram, see your healthcare provider as soon as possible.

About BreastScreen Aotearoa

BreastScreen Aotearoa is New Zealand's national breast screening programme with locations all across the country, including mobile units out in the community. The programme is part of our public health system, so you can access the services for free when you're eligible. The programme and clinics follow international best practice and are delivered by trained mammographers, doctors and nurses. All BreastScreen Aotearoa mammographers are women.

Breast screening is free

You become eligible for free breast screening from age 45. You can then screen every 2 years.

Options for enrolling, and to book and change appointments:



Online

Use the secure personalised link sent in your screening invitations via email, text or letter



Freephone

Call us on **0800 270 200** to connect with a screening provider in your area

If you think you're eligible for free breast screening, but have not received an invitation, you can talk with your healthcare provider, freephone **0800 270 200**, or complete the online form at **TimeToBreastScreen.nz**



Breast screening is your choice

While screening is free with BreastScreen Aotearoa, if you don't wish to participate in this programme, you can still arrange a private mammogram through your healthcare provider, but there may be a cost. If you opt out of screening with BreastScreen Aotearoa it's easy to re-join at any time, as long as you remain eligible. Just phone **0800 270 200**.



Before your breast screening appointment

Getting ready for your appointment - what you need to know

Once you've booked in a breast screen appointment, here are a few things you can do to help you feel more comfortable and prepared.

Choose simple, comfy clothes

During your appointment, you'll be asked to undress from the waist up.

We recommend wearing a top with trousers or a skirt to make it easier. No matter what you wear, you are welcome to bring a lavalava to preserve your modesty during screening. If you wear jewellery – including cultural or faith-based – you may be asked to remove it before your mammogram. You can keep it with you, in a pocket, during the appointment.

Don't put anything on your breasts or armpits

These products can affect the x-ray image, so it's best not to use them on the day of your appointment:

- Creams or lotions
- Deodorant or antiperspirant
- Perfumes
- Oil
- Powders
- Sunscreen.

Don't worry if you forget, most locations can provide a cloth or wipes. Just let your mammographer know.

Allow enough time for your appointment

Your mammogram will usually take around 15-30 minutes. The mammogram itself usually takes about 10 minutes but it's always good to give yourself extra time just in case there's a short wait.

You can bring someone with you

You are welcome to bring a family member or friend to support you before and after your mammogram.



Screening Support Services

Pacific women can access Screening Support Services in some areas. Click on the QR code to find a list of providers in your region.



Extra support

If you let us know when making your appointment, we can offer more support for mobility limitations, and for physical, mental, learning or sensory impairments.

Translation or sign language support can also be provided for your appointment if you let us know these are needed.

Let the mammographer know if you:

- are (or could be) pregnant
- are breastfeeding
- have breast implants
- are on hormone replacement / menopause hormone therapy
- have a medical device or cardiac device (like a pacemaker or insulin pump).

Talk to your mammographer if you're worried

If you're worried or scared during your appointment, let the mammographer know. They will do everything they can to help you feel more comfortable.

During your appointment

Arrival and welcome



1

Come to your appointment, which will be at a clinic or mobile unit.



2

You'll be welcomed and asked to complete a form. Don't forget your glasses if you need them.



3

You'll be shown to a cubicle to change and given a cover. You can also bring a lavalava or other clothing from home, so long as they don't have metal buttons, clasps, or zips.



4

Take off your top, bra and you may be asked to remove jewellery, including cultural and faith-based. Put on your covering.



5

Your mammographer will explain what will happen during your appointment.



6

They will ask permission to touch you to help place and position your breast between two plastic plates.

During your appointment



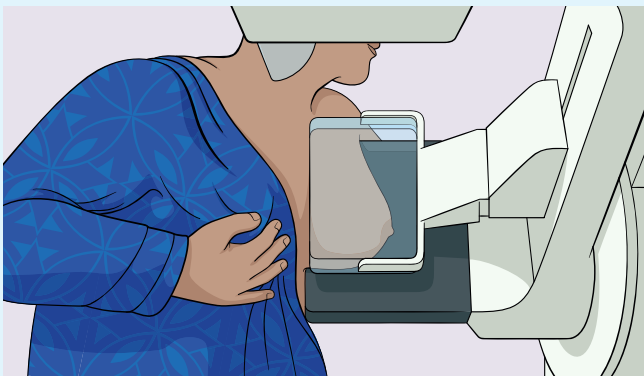
7

When you are ready, the mammographer will press the plates down until your breast flattens and is held firmly. This may feel a little uncomfortable, but allows for a good image.



8

You'll need to hold still for each position and may be asked to hold your breath.



9

Your mammographer will do these same steps for both your breasts. A minimum of four images will be taken.

After the mammogram



10

You can fully cover yourself as soon as both breasts have been x-rayed.



11

Your mammographer will explain what happens with your results.

All done!



12

Put your clothes back on in the changing room, and then you can leave.

What happens after your breast screening?

Reviewing your results

Your mammogram will be carefully checked by two expert radiologists, with the results then sent directly to you by BreastScreen Aotearoa within three weeks. These will also be sent to your healthcare provider. Please let us know at your appointment if you don't wish this to happen.

If your results do not arrive, please freephone **0800 270 200**. If no further checks are needed you will be invited for another breast screen in two years.

If you need more tests

Sometimes we see something on your x-ray that needs a closer look. You may be booked in for one or more of these extra tests:

- Another mammogram or ultrasound
- A breast exam
- A biopsy.

Sometimes, you'll get some results on the day. Full results – especially if a biopsy is done – will be sent directly to you by BreastScreen Aotearoa within a few weeks.

Remember, this doesn't mean you have breast cancer – it just means that more information is needed.

If cancer is found, Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora will support you through assessment and treatment.



✕ Know your rights

Throughout your breast screening journey you have the right to:

- be treated with respect
- be treated fairly
- dignity and independence
- support and care that suits you
- be told things in a way you understand
- be told about your health
- make choices about your care and support
- have a support person or people with you
- decide if you want to be part of training, teaching or research
- make a complaint.

Scan the QR code below or go to www.hdc.org.nz/your-rights to find out more information about your rights.





BreastScreen Aotearoa Manaakitanga Charter

BreastScreen Aotearoa is committed to your care
on your breast screening journey.

1

We will acknowledge you when you enter any of our spaces.

This helps get over the awkwardness of new spaces and people.
So, we'll say hi, introduce ourselves so you feel welcomed.

2

We will always use your name.

Your NHI number is not who you are, you're more than that.
Your name is a gift and we will use it throughout your appointment.

3

We will always encourage you to ask questions.

Understanding what's going on will help you make informed decisions.
If you have questions or are unsure about anything, please ask any of our
team and they will answer them as best as they can.

4

We will protect your modesty.

Your body is sacred and we will offer you something to cover up
with while waiting.

5

We will be present with you.

We all have demands on our time, but while you are with us, we will listen
and engage with you throughout the process because you deserve that.

6

We will always say thank you.

Just as saying hello is important, we will always acknowledge when
you leave, because in two years time you will return again. But if you
have questions before then, you can always get in touch.



We wish you well on your breast screening journey

Notes

TimeToBreastScreen.nz

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