



*'I visit BreastScreen NSW every two years.  
The staff are so friendly and the whole  
thing takes about 20 minutes. It's so good  
to know everything is ok.'*

I have decided to participate in free  
screening at BreastScreen NSW.  
How do I make my appointment?

Simply call

**13 20 50**

for your free appointment at the  
BreastScreen NSW centre nearest you.  
We look forward to your call.

For the assistance of an interpreter call:

**13 14 50**

For further information about  
BreastScreen NSW visit:

**[www.bsnsw.org.au](http://www.bsnsw.org.au)**



EARLY DETECTION  
IS VITAL

FOR WOMEN AGED 50 TO 69  
EVERY TWO YEARS

20 MINUTES THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE



## Why is having a free screening mammogram at BreastScreen NSW a good idea?

The best time to treat breast cancer is when it is still very small. A screening mammogram (breast x-ray to detect the early signs of breast cancer) can find cancers early – when they are as small as a **pea**. Without screening, cancers are more likely to be noticed or felt when they are much more advanced, say the size of a **small cherry**. Generally, the earlier a cancer is found, the more treatment options are available and the greater the chances of survival from the disease.

The choice to have a screening mammogram is yours, however medical authorities recommend it.

A screening mammogram cannot stop you from getting breast cancer, but through early detection, it can give you a better chance of successful treatment.



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## Am I at risk?

Women in NSW currently have a 1 in 8 risk of developing breast cancer in their lifetime. The risk of developing breast cancer increases with age. The biggest risk factors for breast cancer are being a woman and being over 50 years of age.

## What happens when I visit BreastScreen NSW?

You will be welcomed by our receptionist, who will make sure that you have completed the relevant forms. In a private change room you will undress to the waist and then put on a gown to replace your top. A female radiographer will carefully position you and quickly take the x-ray, taking two views of each breast.

Two specially trained doctors (radiologists) will independently examine the x-ray. The results of your screening mammogram will be mailed to you and to your doctor with your consent.

## How does it feel to have a screening mammogram?

Some women find it uncomfortable but this discomfort usually only lasts while the breast is compressed (approximately 10 seconds).

Compression of the breast during a screening mammogram is important so that the clearest possible picture can be taken, using the least amount of radiation.

## How safe is a screening mammogram?

A very low amount of radiation is needed when a screening mammogram is taken. Research shows that the benefits of having a screening mammogram far outweigh any possible risks from radiation. The health advantage is that if a breast cancer is found early, there are more treatment options available and a better chance of survival.

## Is the screening mammogram free?

**Yes it is!** BreastScreen NSW is a government funded program, which provides a free screening mammogram every two years to women aged 50 to 69 throughout NSW. BreastScreen NSW is part of BreastScreen Australia, a joint Commonwealth, State and Territory program with high quality standards.

## Am I eligible and how can I make an appointment?

**The BreastScreen NSW program targets women aged 50 to 69 as a priority**, however all women over 40 years are eligible for free screening mammograms.

You do not need a doctor's referral to make an appointment at BreastScreen NSW. Simply call **13 20 50** to arrange an appointment at the screening centre nearest you.

A screening mammogram at BreastScreen NSW is not available to women under the age of 40 years.

## What if I notice an unusual change in my breast?

If you notice an unusual change in your breast such as a lump, pain or nipple discharge, please contact your general practitioner before you make an appointment at BreastScreen NSW.

## Your decision to screen

A screening mammogram is the best way of detecting cancer early, but like other screening tests, is not perfect.

Not all cancers will be detected through screening - some cancers cannot be seen on the screening mammogram, some cancers develop during the time between screening mammograms and there is a slim chance that in the process of taking and reading the mammogram, the cancer will be missed.

Also a screening mammogram may detect abnormalities in the breast tissue which may necessitate further tests, but which do not turn out to be cancer. These incidents are known as 'false positives', and are an unavoidable aspect of the screening process. However, the potential benefits of screening mammograms far outweigh the possible harms.

The choice to be screened is yours. The current medical recommendation is that all women aged between 50 to 69 years should have a screening mammogram every two years.

## What else should I do to be breast aware?

As well as having your regular screening mammogram every two years, we recommend you:

- Get to know the normal look and feel of your breasts and see your doctor immediately if you notice any unusual changes in your breasts, such as lumps, pain or nipple discharge, even if your screening mammogram result has been normal.
- Ask your doctor about your risk of breast cancer and the need for breast cancer screening.