

Breast screening

What you need to know



NHS
SCOTLAND



**healthier
scotland**
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

This resource is available in Urdu, Chinese and Polish, and in an Easy Read format. NHS Health Scotland is happy to consider requests for other languages and formats. Please contact 0131 536 5500 or email nhs.healthscotland-alternativeformats@nhs.net

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What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet tells you about screening for breast cancer. It aims to help you choose whether you take part in the Scottish Breast Screening Programme.

What is breast screening in NHS Scotland?

- Breast screening uses X-rays to look for breast cancers, often when they are too small to be seen or felt.
- These X-ray images are called mammograms.
- Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women and it is more likely to affect you as you get older. Breast screening reduces the number of deaths from breast cancer.



**Get to know your body
so you can spot any
breast changes early**

Who is offered breast screening in Scotland and how often?

The Scottish Breast Screening Programme invites all women between 50 and 70 years old for breast screening. We offer breast screening every three years and you should get your first invitation before your 53rd birthday. We do not send you an invitation if you are over 70 but, as you remain at risk of developing breast cancer, you are still welcome to come for screening every three years. Just phone your local screening centre (see pages 20 and 21) and ask for an appointment.

The risk of developing breast cancer increases with age, but if you are under 50 years old you should still be **'breast aware'** (see pages 12 and 13) so you can spot breast changes early.

You should speak to your GP straight away if you are worried about a breast problem, including a family history of breast cancer, whether you go for breast screening or not.



**All women in Scotland
aged 50 to 70 are
invited to attend
breast screening**

What are the benefits of breast screening?

- Screening can find cancer early, before you know it's there. The earlier breast cancer is found, the better your chance of surviving it.
- If a breast cancer is found early, you are less likely to have a mastectomy (your breast removed) or chemotherapy.
- Regular screening reduces the number of deaths from breast cancer.

Does breast screening find every cancer?

No. Some cancers don't show up at all on mammograms. A small number of cancers may not be seen on the mammograms by the people reading them. This can happen no matter how skilled the people reading the mammograms are. Therefore, you should be **'breast aware'** (see pages 12 and 13) whether you go for breast screening or not.

Does screening prevent breast cancer?

No. Screening only finds cancer if it is already there at the time of screening, but it can find cancers at an early stage.

What are the downsides of being screened?

- Having a mammogram means your breasts are exposed to a small amount of radiation.
- As stated above, sometimes a mammogram will look normal, even if a cancer is there.
- Cancer may develop between screening appointments, so you should remain **'breast aware'** (see pages 12 and 13).

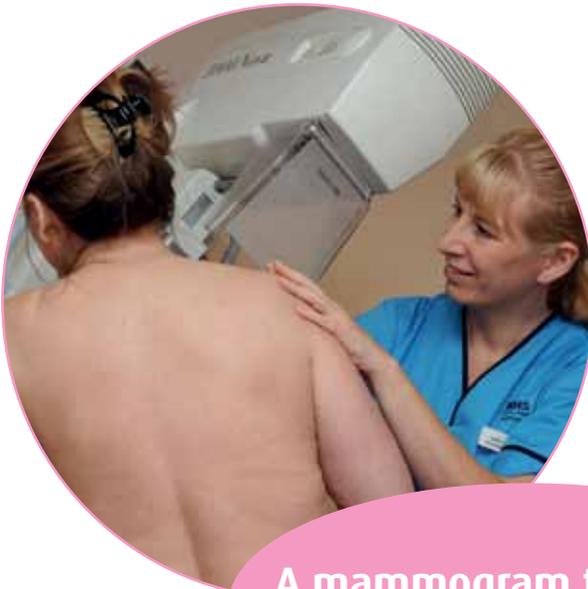
- Sometimes a mammogram will **not** look normal and you will be recalled for more tests, even though cancer is not there.
- Screening can find early forms of breast cancer called ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS). We don't know which cases of DCIS will become harmful so we offer treatment to all these women.
- You may be anxious or worried about your screening appointments. This anxiety or worry usually lasts for only a short time but please contact your GP or screening centre if you wish to discuss this.



Breast screening usually occurs at your local screening centre or mobile unit

Where do I go for breast screening?

Depending on where you live, you will be invited to either a mobile screening unit or one of the six screening centres in Scotland (see pages 20 and 21). Your invitation letter will tell you where to go. If you are invited to a mobile unit and are unable to climb steps or need any other assistance, please advise the screening centre. If your appointment time or location isn't convenient, please phone the screening centre to rearrange your appointment.



**A mammogram takes only
a few minutes**

What happens during breast screening?

Breast screening is carried out by female staff only (mammographers). Because you will only be asked to undress from the waist up, it may be easier to wear trousers or a skirt for your appointment. Please don't use talcum powder or spray deodorant when you go for screening. Roll-on deodorant does not affect the mammograms.

The mammographer will ask you a few questions and will explain what will happen. She will place one breast at a time between two special plates on the mammogram machine and take two pictures of each breast. Your breast needs to be pressed firmly between the plates for a few seconds so that clear mammograms can be taken.

A mammogram takes only a few minutes. Your breast screening visit should take about half an hour altogether.

Does having a mammogram hurt?

Most women find having a mammogram uncomfortable. Some women find it painful, but only for a few seconds. Very few women find the pain lasts longer than this. Remember, you are in control and can say 'stop' at any time if you feel too uncomfortable.

When do I get the results?

Your results letter will be sent to your home address within three weeks. Your GP will also be sent your results. Should your results not arrive within three weeks, please contact the screening centre.

What mammogram results might I get?

Most women get a normal screening result (their mammogram shows no sign of cancer). However, you may still develop breast cancer in the future, therefore you should remain **'breast aware'** (see pages 12 and 13).

A very small number of women may be recalled if the original mammograms are not of satisfactory quality.

Around one in 20 women are called back because their mammograms show that more tests are needed. This happens more often for women having their first set of mammograms. This may be because we do not have other mammograms to compare them with. Something that looks unusual on your first set of mammograms may be completely normal for you.

We may do further tests, including an examination, more mammograms, an ultrasound scan or a biopsy. A biopsy is when we take a small sample of tissue (you will be offered a local anaesthetic to do this). We carry out these tests to show whether or not you have breast cancer.

What if I am told I have breast cancer, including DCIS?

You will be cared for by a specialist breast cancer team. They will talk to you about your diagnosis, the support you can get and your treatment options. Most, but not all, cancers found at breast screening can be treated successfully.

What happens to my mammograms after screening?

- We will keep your mammograms for at least nine years.
- We regularly review our screening service to make sure we offer you the best service possible. Only authorised staff and appropriate healthcare professionals have access to this information. Screening information is also used to ensure that the breast screening service meets agreed standards, and to identify areas for improvement.
- You have the right to see or get a copy of any personal information that we keep about you. You may have to pay for this. You can ask the screening centre for more information about this.
- If you need more information about NHS record-keeping, you can phone the NHS inform helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88; the helpline also provides an interpreting service).

Be breast aware

You can develop breast cancer at any time. This includes the time in between breast screening appointments. Being breast aware is about getting to know your own body so you can spot any breast changes early. The most important things you need to know about breast awareness are what is normal for you and that you should tell your GP about any changes as soon as you spot them.



Changes in your breasts, including the area up to your armpit, may be harmless, but you should get them checked straight away. You need to look out for:

- any lumps, thickening or bumpy areas
- changes in appearance, like puckered or dimpled skin
- discomfort or pain that is different from normal
- nipple discharge, a rash, red areas that won't heal, or a change in your nipple position (pointing differently or pulled in).

It is common for women of all ages to find changes to their breasts themselves (partners may also notice changes), so checking your breasts regularly is important.

If you notice any changes in your breasts that are not normal for you, please speak to your GP straight away.

What happens if...

...I have not accepted previous invitations for breast screening, can I still attend?

Yes. You can attend even if you have not been before.

...I have had mammograms elsewhere?

You can still attend, provided that the mammograms were taken more than six months ago. If you have had mammograms taken more recently, please contact the screening centre, who will advise you if you need to attend or not.

...I have previously had breast cancer?

Please contact your screening centre to discuss your appointment.

...I need an interpreter?

If you need the assistance of an interpreter, please let us know when you receive your appointment letter so that arrangements can be made.

...I need to claim travel expenses?

If you are on income support, you can reclaim your expenses. For more information please contact the NHS inform helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88; the helpline also provides an interpreting service).

...I would like to be accompanied during screening?

Your breast screening examination will be carried out by a female mammographer. If you would like someone else with you during this examination, please contact the screening centre before your appointment to discuss this.

...I have a disability or need additional assistance?

Please contact the centre, even if you have attended in the past. This will allow us to arrange a suitable appointment for you.

...I have implants, can I still go for screening?

Yes. Please contact the centre and a leaflet giving further information will be sent to you. If your appointment has been made for a mobile screening unit, it will need to be changed for the screening centre where the necessary equipment will be available.

...I need more information?

If you would like more information about breast screening or breast care support groups, or advice on breast awareness, please ask any member of our staff at the breast screening service or your GP. You can find contact details for further information and support services on pages 18 and 19.

Some statistics you might find helpful

Here are some statistics on breast cancer and breast cancer screening in Scotland. The majority of data comes from the Scottish Breast Screening Programme and the Scottish Cancer Registry; other data are from UK breast screening statistics. The numbers are current 'best estimates' but may change over time.

- Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. There are around 4,600 new breast cancer cases a year in Scotland; this includes an early form of breast cancer called ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS).
- Eight out of 10 breast cancers are found in women aged 50 and over.
- The Scottish Breast Screening Programme has detected over 18,500 cases of breast cancer since 1991. The Scottish Breast Screening Programme has contributed to a reduction in the risk of dying from breast cancer by around a third since the start of the programme.
- For every 400 women screened regularly for 10 years, one less woman will die from breast cancer. This means that around 130 women are prevented from dying from breast cancer each year in Scotland.
- For every 14,000 women screened regularly for 10 years, one woman may develop breast cancer because of the radiation from the mammograms.

- About eight out of 1,000 women screened will be found to have breast cancer. Of these, two will be told they have DCIS. We don't know which cases of DCIS will become harmful so we offer treatment to all of these women.
- If breast cancer is found by screening you will be offered treatment. Most women will be offered a combination of different treatment options.
 - You may be offered surgery. Where cancer is found by screening, about seven out of 10 women will have a lumpectomy (removal of the affected tissue) with the majority also having radiotherapy. About two out of 10 women will have a mastectomy (have a breast removed) and may be offered breast reconstruction where appropriate.
 - You may be offered chemotherapy. About two out of 10 women with breast cancer found by screening have chemotherapy.
- Just over 1,000 women die of breast cancer each year in Scotland.

**For further information call the
NHS inform helpline on 0800 22 44 88
(textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88;
the helpline also provides an
interpreting service)**

More information and support

If you have any questions or would like further information:

- Speak to your GP
- Contact your local screening unit (details on pages 20 and 21)
- Visit the NHS inform website at **www.nhsinform.co.uk**
- For information regarding your health rights and confidentiality visit **www.hris.org.uk**
- Download the NHS *Be Breast Aware* leaflet at **www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/breastscreen/publications/be-breast-aware.html**

The websites below are suggested as sources of information but they are not endorsed by the Scottish Breast Screening Programme:

- Contact Health Talk Online at **www.healthtalkonline.org**
- Contact Cancer Research UK by phoning **0808 800 4040** or by going to **www.cancerresearchuk.org**
- Contact Breakthrough Breast Cancer by phoning **08080 100 200** or by going to **www.breakthrough.org.uk/scotland**
- Contact Breast Cancer Care by phoning **0808 800 6000** or by going to **www.breastcancercare.org.uk**
- Contact Scottish Breast Cancer Campaign by phoning **0131 623 0037** or by going to **www.scottishbreastcancercampaign.org**

Scottish Breast Screening Programme – centres and areas covered

1 North of Scotland

Highland Breast Centre
Raigmore Hospital
Inverness IV2 3UJ

Tel: 01463 713222

Covers: NHS Highland (excluding the Argyll and Bute area), NHS Western Isles, and the Forres area of Grampian

2 North East of Scotland

Breast Screening Centre
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
Foresterhill Road
Aberdeen AB25 2XF

Tel: 01224 550570

Covers: NHS Grampian, NHS Orkney, and NHS Shetland

3 West of Scotland

Breast Screening Centre
Stock Exchange Court
77 Nelson Mandela Place
Glasgow G2 1QT

Tel: 0141 572 5800

Text phone: 0141 572 5858

Covers: NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, NHS Lanarkshire, part of NHS Forth Valley (including Killin, Tillicoultry and Alloa), and part of NHS Highland (including Port Appin, Oban, Islay, Tarbert, Campbeltown and Bute)

4 South West of Scotland

Breast Screening Centre
Ayrshire Central Hospital
Kilwinning Road
Irvine
Ayrshire KA12 8SS

**Tel: 01294 323505 or
323506 or 323507**

Covers: NHS Ayrshire and Arran, and NHS Dumfries and Galloway



1. North of Scotland

2. North East of Scotland

5. East of Scotland

3. West of Scotland

6. South East of Scotland

4. South West of Scotland

5 East of Scotland

Breast Screening Centre
South Block Level 7
Ninewells Hospital
Dundee DD1 9SY

Tel: 01382 425646

Covers: NHS Tayside,
North East part of NHS Fife
(including Cupar, East Neuk,
and St Andrews)

6 South East of Scotland

Breast Screening Centre
Ardmillan House
42 Ardmillan Terrace
Edinburgh EH11 2JL

Tel: 0131 537 7400

Covers: NHS Lothian,
NHS Borders, part of NHS
Forth Valley (including
Falkirk, Grangemouth, and
Slamannan), and part of
NHS Fife (including Markinch,
Dunfermline, Glenrothes
and Leven)

Notes

This publication is available online at www.healthscotland.com or telephone **0131 536 5500**.

Traditional Chinese

您也可以登入 **www.healthscotland.com** 瀏覽本刊物，或撥打 **0131 536 5500** 查詢。

Polish

Ta publikacja jest dostępna online na stronie **www.healthscotland.com** lub pod numerem telefonu **0131 536 5500**, gdzie można także zgłaszać wszelkie zapytania.

Urdu

یہ اشاعت آن لائن **www.healthscotland.com** پر دستیاب ہے
یا کسی سوالات کے لیے **0131 536 5500** پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔

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