

Breast Screening

Helping you decide



It is up to you if you want to have breast screening or not. This leaflet will help you decide.

Why does the NHS offer breast screening?

The NHS offers breast screening so that fewer women will die from breast cancer. Screening does this by finding breast cancers early, when they are too small to see or feel. Breast screening does not prevent you from getting breast cancer.

Screening saves lives from breast cancer, but it does have some risks. Sometimes screening finds cancers that might be harmless, and the treatment can cause side effects. You can find out more about this on page 6.

You may find it helpful to:

- visit **www.nhsinform.co.uk/screening/breast**
- contact the NHS inform helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88). The helpline is open every day 8 am to 10 pm and also has an interpreting service.
- talk to your friends and family who have already had screening.

Who is offered breast screening in Scotland and why?

About every three years, NHS Scotland invites all women aged between 50 and 70 to have breast screening.

Women aged between 50 and 70

We know that older women are more likely to get breast cancer and that the best way to find it is by using breast X-rays (called mammograms) for women between the ages of 50 and 70.

Women over the age of 70

You are still welcome to come for screening every three years. To make an appointment you can phone your local screening centre (see page 10 for details). As you keep getting older it is more likely that you will get breast cancer, so you should **check your breasts regularly for changes** and contact your GP if you are worried.

Things you should know about breast screening

Benefits

- Screening can find breast cancer before you think anything might be wrong
- The earlier breast cancer is found, the better chance you have of surviving it.
- If breast cancer is found early it will usually need less treatment.

Risks

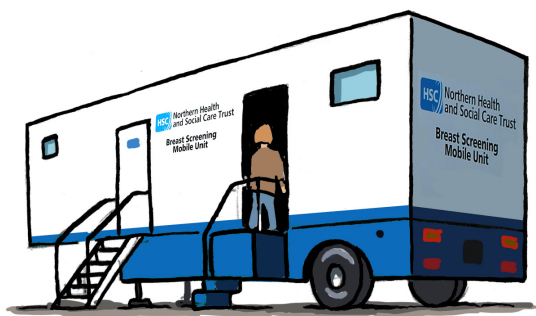
- Mammograms (breast x-rays) do not find all cancers so sometimes they look normal even if cancer is there. This is why **it's important to keep regularly checking your breasts for any changes** in between screening.
- Screening might find cancer that wouldn't do you any harm. It will be up to you to decide if you want treatment.
- There is a very small chance that having your breasts X-rayed can cause breast cancer.
- Breast screening can be embarrassing, a bit uncomfortable and can make you worry.

Does screening stop you getting breast cancer?

No. Screening can find cancer early, before it can be seen or felt, but it can only find cancer if it is already there.

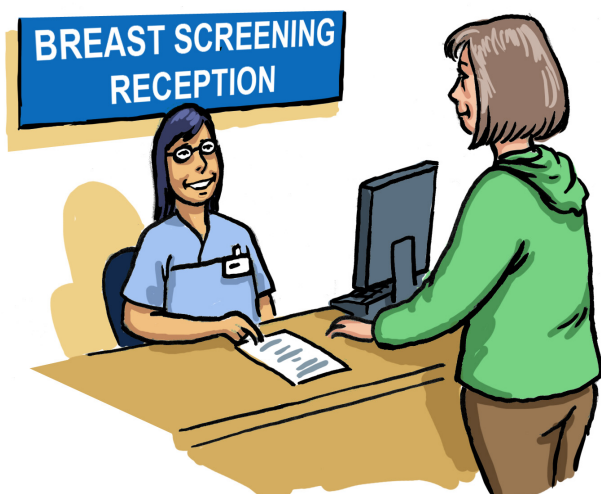
How will I know when to go for screening?

You will be sent an invitation letter. You should get your first invitation before your 53rd birthday. If you haven't, please contact your local screening centre (see page 10 for details).



Where do I go for breast screening?

It depends on where you live. You will be invited to a mobile screening unit, or one of the six screening centres in Scotland. The numbers for the Scottish screening centres can be found on page 10 of this leaflet.



What happens during breast screening?



Your appointment will usually take no more than half an hour and the mammogram (breast x-ray) itself only takes a few minutes.

This part of the breast screening is carried out by female staff only (mammographers). The mammographer will ask you a few questions and will explain what will happen. You can ask your mammographer questions at any time.

You will be asked to undress from the waist up, so you may find it more helpful to wear trousers or a skirt. The screening will be done in private and you can cover up with your own top when you aren't having the mammogram.

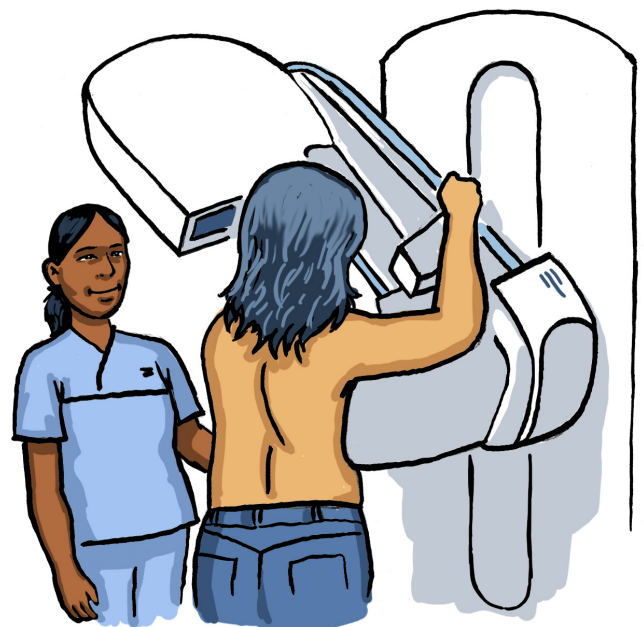
Please don't use talcum powder or spray deodorant when you go for screening. Roll-on deodorant does not affect the mammograms.

What does a mammogram feel like?

Your mammographer will position one breast at a time between two special plates on the mammogram machine and will take two pictures of each breast. Your breast needs to be pressed firmly between the plates for a few seconds so that the mammographer can take a good picture.

You will have to stay as still as possible for a few seconds while the pictures are taken. You cannot feel the X-ray.

Remember, you are in control and can say 'stop' at any time if you feel too uncomfortable.



When do I get the results?

A letter with your results will be sent to your home address within three weeks. Your GP will also be sent a copy of your results. If your results do not arrive within three weeks please contact the screening centre you went to.



What mammogram results might I get?

Most women will get a letter saying their mammograms are clear and that they will be invited for breast screening again in three years time. This means your mammogram shows no sign of cancer. However, you may still develop breast cancer so you should stay **'breast aware'** (see page 7).

A very small number of women will be asked for a **'technical recall'**. This means that something went wrong with the picture that was taken by your mammographer. You will be asked to return to the screening centre for another mammogram.

A small number of women will be asked to have more tests. This is called a **second stage of screening**. This means your mammogram may show something the doctors want to look at more closely.

If you are invited back to the second stage of screening because further tests are needed, you may get a breast examination, more mammograms and/or an ultrasound scan. Some women will also need a biopsy. A biopsy is when a small sample is taken from the breast (you will be offered a local anaesthetic for this). We do these tests to find out if you have breast cancer.

If you have breast cancer

What is cancer?

Cancer is when a part of your breast starts to grow in the wrong way and forms a lump. This is also called a tumour.

There are different types of breast cancer, called 'invasive' and 'non-invasive'. If a tumour is 'invasive', this means that the lump has spread from where it started to grow and is now in other parts of the breast. This type of cancer will probably spread to other parts of the body if it is not treated.

If a tumour is 'non-invasive', this means that the lump has not spread into other parts of the breast. For some women, this type of cancer will never spread, even if they do not get treatment. But for other women, this type of cancer might spread if they do not get treatment.

If a tumour does spread into other parts of the body, there's a chance you might die.

Treatment

Doctors cannot always tell if a breast cancer that is found will go on to be life-threatening or not. You will be offered treatment and care from a team of breast cancer specialists. There are different kinds of treatment and your doctor will tell you which is best for you.

While these treatments save lives, they can also cause bad side effects that can last for a long time. If there are choices about your treatment, you will get all the information and support you need to help decide what is right for you.

Making a choice

Breast screening could stop you dying from breast cancer BUT breast screening could also mean that you get treated for a cancer that would never have put your life in danger.

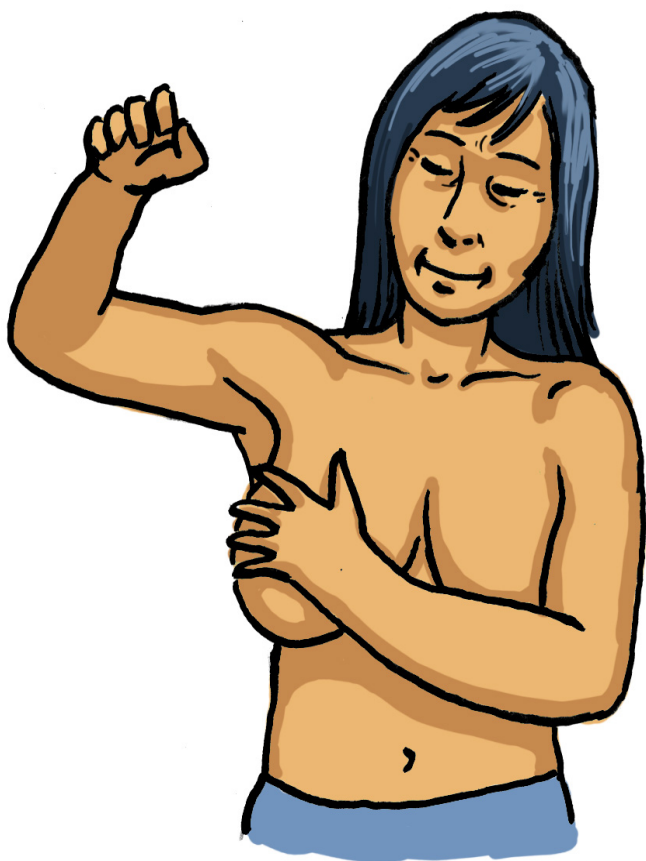
It is up to you if you want screening or not. Breast cancer is the most common kind of cancer for women. About 1000 women in Scotland die from breast

cancer every year. Screening saves about 130 women from breast cancer every year.

For every 1 woman who has her life saved from breast cancer through breast screening, 3 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer that might never have become life threatening.

If you want more help to decide if you should have screening, speak to a health professional.

You can also visit www.nhsinform.co.uk/screening/breast for more information. You can also contact the NHS inform helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88). The helpline is open every day 8 am to 10 pm and also has an interpreting service.



Be breast aware

Being breast aware is about getting to know your own body so that you can notice changes to your breasts straight away. You need to know what is normal for you and you should tell your GP about any changes as soon as you find them.

Don't get scared, get checked!

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. You can do this in the bath or shower, when you use body lotion, or when you get dressed.

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:

- a lump, a thickened area or bumps in either breast
- a change in the size or shape of one or both breasts

- a lump or swelling in either of your armpits
- skin that looks like orange peel
- crusting on or around the nipple
- a leaking nipple which might have blood in it
- dimples or sunken areas of skin
- a nipple that's become turned in.

Men can also get breast cancer and about 29 men are found to have breast cancer each year in Scotland.

For more information, visit www.nhsinform.co.uk/cancer/scotland/dce

What happens if...

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

Yes. It's best to go along every time you are invited, but you can have screening even if you have not been before.

...I have had mammograms somewhere else?

You can still go if the other mammograms were taken more than six months ago. If you have had mammograms taken more recently, please contact the screening centre to ask if still you need to go.

...I have previously had breast cancer?

Please contact your screening centre to talk about your appointment.

...I need an interpreter at my appointment?

If you need an interpreter, please contact your local screening centre to let us know when you get 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 is open every day from 8 am to 10 pm and also has an interpreting service.

...I would like to have someone with me when I come for screening?

Your breast screening examination will be carried out by a female mammographer. You are welcome to bring someone along with you if it would be helpful, **but please note that men are not allowed to enter the mobile units**. Please contact the screening centre before your appointment if you would like to bring someone with you.

...I have access needs?

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 breast implants, can I still go for screening?

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

...I choose not to go for screening?

Please call the screening centre to let them know that you will not be going for screening. If you decide you want screening later on, you will be able to make a new appointment.

You will be invited for screening again in three years. If you do not want to be invited again, tell the screening centre. They will give you a form to fill in. This will mean you will not be invited for screening again. You can change your mind at any time and get screening again.

What happens to my mammograms after screening?

Your screening information is used to make sure that the breast screening service is doing a good job. Only authorised staff and healthcare professionals are allowed to see your screening information.

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 is open every day 8 am to 10 pm and also provides an interpreting service.

More information and support

NHS inform's web pages have further information about breast screening in Scotland: **www.nhsinform.co.uk/screening/breast**

You can also read about getting support and advice about spotting the signs and symptoms of cancer, including breast cancer, as early as possible: **www.nhsinform.co.uk/cancer/scotland/dce**

For information about your health rights and privacy visit **www.hris.org.uk**

Scottish Breast Screening Centres

North of Scotland (Inverness)

Tel: **01463 705416**

North East of Scotland (Aberdeen)

Tel: **01224 550570**

West of Scotland (Glasgow)

Tel: **0141 800 8800**

Text phone: **0141 800 8858**

South West of Scotland (Irvine)

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

East of Scotland (Dundee)

Tel: **01382 425646**

South East of Scotland (Edinburgh)

Tel: **0131 537 7400**

The Scottish Breast Screening Programme is regularly reviewed to make sure we offer the best possible service to you. If you have a complaint, or want to make a comment or suggestion about the content of this information leaflet, please contact Carol Colquhoun (National Coordinator of Screening Programmes, National Services Division)

by email: **NSS.nsd-enquiries@nhs.net**

post: National Services Division, Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent,
Edinburgh EH12 9EB

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This resource is available in Urdu, Chinese and Polish NHS Health Scotland is happy to consider requests for other languages and formats. Please contact **0131 536 5500** or email

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