

BreastScreen Victoria Information Sheet

Before your screen



- Discuss your family history of cancer.
- Wear a top and pants or skirt.

At your screen



- You will remove your top in private; ask if you would like to wear a gown.
- The machine will press firmly on your breasts to take the x-ray images.

After your screen



- We will send your results in 2 to 4 weeks.
- If you need further tests, we will ask you to come back.

2 years later



- We invite most people to have a breast screen every 2 years.
- See your doctor if you notice any changes between breast screens.

Before your breast screen

Who is BreastScreen Victoria?

BreastScreen Victoria is an accredited part of BreastScreen Australia – the national screening program for breast cancer. We invite eligible Victorians aged 50 to 74 to have a free breast screen (mammogram) every 2 years. We contract public and private health service providers to deliver breast screening in Victoria.

What is a breast screen?

A breast screen is a low-dose x-ray of the breast, recommended every 2 years from age 50 to 74 years old. At BreastScreen Victoria, we will typically take two x-ray images of each breast – one from the top and one from the side. Breast screens can find cancers that are too small to feel. The sooner cancer is found, the more successful treatment is likely to be.

Are breast screens safe?

Each time you have a breast screen, your breasts are exposed to a very small amount of radiation. Research shows that the benefits of breast screens in finding cancer early outweigh any radiation risks.

What if I notice changes to my breasts?

It is important to get to know the normal look and feel of your breasts. If you notice any changes to your breasts, such as a new lump, nipple discharge or redness, see your doctor as soon as possible. Please do not visit BreastScreen Victoria.

Will I need to bring my previous breast x-ray images?

If you have had a breast screen before – through BreastScreen Victoria or a private provider – it is important that we have a

copy of your previous breast x-ray images to compare. This will improve the accuracy of your breast screen result.

When you booked your appointment, we asked if your last mammogram was done by BreastScreen Victoria. If you answered yes, we offered to obtain your x-ray images electronically with your consent. Alternatively, we asked that you bring your x-ray images to your appointment.

Will I need to share my family history?

We collect information about your family history of breast and ovarian cancer so that we can provide better care. We use this information to estimate your personal risk of developing breast cancer.

Before completing your registration form, please talk to your family about your family history. For more information, go to breastscreen.org.au/family-history

What if I have breast implants?

Most people with implants can have breast screens. Please read the fact sheet titled *Breast screening with implants* at breastscreen.org.au/resources/community

We will not advise you about problems with your implants. If you notice an issue or are concerned about your implants, please see your doctor as soon as possible.

What should I wear to my appointment?

We recommend wearing a skirt or pants and top to your appointment. This will allow you to easily remove your top for the breast screen. Please wear minimal jewellery. If you have long hair, please bring a hair tie or wear your hair up.

What if I am planning to travel shortly after my breast screen?

Your breast screen results will be reviewed by two or more specially trained health professionals before being sent to you. This process can take approximately 2 to 4 weeks. As such, we strongly recommend allowing 4 to 6 weeks between your breast screen appointment and any trip. Please let your receptionist or radiographer know if you plan to travel within 4 to 6 weeks of your breast screen.

At your breast screen

What will happen at my appointment?

You will be welcomed by a member of our team who will explain the breast screening process. A woman radiographer will then take you into the mammography room. Please ask if you would like a gown. When you are ready, the radiographer will take at least two x-ray images of each breast. The process will take about 10 minutes.

Can I talk to the radiographer?

You are welcome to talk to the radiographer. They will be happy to answer any questions or address any concerns you may have.

Will the breast screen hurt?

It is normal to feel discomfort during your breast screen, but this should only last a few seconds. This is because your breasts need to be pressed firmly between two plates on the mammogram machine so that we can take clear x-ray images. Please tell your radiographer if you feel any pain. They will work with you to make sure that your breast screen is as comfortable as possible. You can ask for the breast screen to stop at any time.

Will you need to compress my breasts?

There are several important reasons why we must compress your breasts during a breast screen. Compression holds the breasts still and reduces motion, spreading and separating the breast tissue so that we can take clear x-ray images. It also decreases the amount of radiation required for each x-ray image.

After your breast screen

When will I get my results?

Your breast x-ray images will be independently reviewed at least twice. If you participate in our reading trial, your images may be reviewed by software plus at least one specially trained doctor (radiologist). Your results will be sent to you within approximately 2 to 4 weeks. They will also be sent to your doctor if you provide their details.

Will I be asked to come back for more tests?

We may ask you to come back to BreastScreen Victoria for more tests if there is an area on your breast x-ray images

that needs further investigation. Most clients who are called back to BreastScreen Victoria do not have breast cancer. If it is your first breast screen, you are more likely to be called back as we will not have any x-ray images on record to compare against.

Where will I need to go for more tests?

Further tests may be performed at a different location to your initial breast screen appointment. We have specialised assessment clinics across the state, equipped with technology to perform any additional tests required.

Will a breast screen find all cancers?

Breast screens are the best way to find breast cancer at an early stage. However, they are not 100% accurate. There is a small chance that breast x-ray images will look normal even if breast cancer is present.

Will I be told my breast density?

Yes, you will be notified of your breast density category with your results.

For more information about breast density visit breastscreen.org.au/breastdensity or call 13 20 50 to request a fact sheet.

2 years later

What happens when my next breast screen is due?

A breast screen every 2 years between age 50 to 74 is the best way to find breast cancer early. We will send you a reminder letter when your next breast screen is due. If you are aged 40 to 49 or over 74 and eligible to screen, you will not receive a reminder letter, but you can book a breast screen every 2 years.

What should I do between breast screens?

Breast cancer can develop at any time. Even if you have a breast screen every 2 years, it is important to stay breast aware. We recommend you get to know the normal look and feel of your breasts. If you notice any changes to your breasts, such as a new lump, nipple discharge or redness, see your doctor as soon as possible.

Your privacy

At BreastScreen Victoria, we use the information you provide and your test results to screen for breast cancer and send reminders when you are next due to screen. Only authorised people have access to your information. We will only use or release information that identifies you with your consent, or where we are required to do so by law. Access to your information for research will only be provided with ethical approval. Go to breastscreen.org.au/privacy

Contact us: email info@breastscreen.org.au or call 13 20 50.

Book at breastscreen.org.au
or call 13 20 50

TTY 13 36 77 if you have hearing or
speech difficulties



BreastScreen Victoria acknowledges the
support of the Victorian Government.



For more information or to change your details,
visit breastscreen.org.au or call 13 20 50



For interpreter assistance, call 13 14 50



Translated information:
breastscreen.org.au/translations