

# Breast screening with implants

This document includes information about having a breast screen (mammogram) if you have breast implants.

## 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.

## Can I have a breast screen if I have implants?

You can have regular breast screens every 2 years if you have breast implants.

Before making an appointment, you may wish to discuss with your doctor whether breast screening is suitable for you. Implants make it harder to see breast tissue on standard breast screens, so more x-ray images will be required to show as much breast tissue as possible. You will need a slightly longer appointment (approximately 20 minutes).

## Will I be told if any problems are found with my implants?

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

## Will the breast screen hurt?

You may experience some discomfort during a breast screen, as we usually need to move implants back to expose the maximum amount of breast tissue. Most people find this discomfort does not last long.

If you experience pain during your breast screen, please let the radiographer know.

You can ask for the breast screen to stop at any time.

## Will a breast screen find all cancers?

Breast screens are the most effective test for finding breast cancer early. However, they are not 100% accurate. Breast implants can cover some of the breast tissue which may make it more difficult to find small breast cancers.

## Is it safe for me to have regular breast screens?

Breast screening is generally safe for people with implants. However, it is important to consider the risks and the benefits before you decide to screen with BreastScreen Victoria.

- There is an extremely small chance that the pressure placed on implants during a breast screen could cause them to rupture or break.
- If you have implants which have already ruptured or started to leak, it is possible that a breast screen could increase the amount of silicone or saline (depending on the type of implants) which spreads into the breast tissue.
- In some implants, very small amounts of silicone or saline (depending on the type of implants) pass through the pores of the implant shell. This is sometimes called 'bleeding' of the implants. At present, it is not known whether breast screening increases implant bleeding.
- There is a small chance that a breast screen may change the shape of the breasts by dispersing the fibrous capsule that often grows around implants. Your breasts may feel softer after your breast screen. However, it cannot be guaranteed that both breasts will be affected equally.
- People with implants will be exposed to more radiation during breast screening than those without implants due to the extra x-ray images required.

We encourage you to discuss the risks and benefits of breast screening with your doctor.

### If I notice a problem with my implants, can they be assessed through BreastScreen Victoria?

We will not assess implant problems. If you notice a problem with your implants, please see your doctor as soon as possible.

### Am I more likely to develop cancer if I have breast implants?

At present, there is no evidence that those who have breast implants are more likely to develop breast cancer.

### How often should I have a breast screen if I have implants?

Our program offers free breast screens to most clients every 2 years. However, you should discuss how often you should have a breast screen with your doctor.

Whether or not you have a breast screen every 2 years, 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.

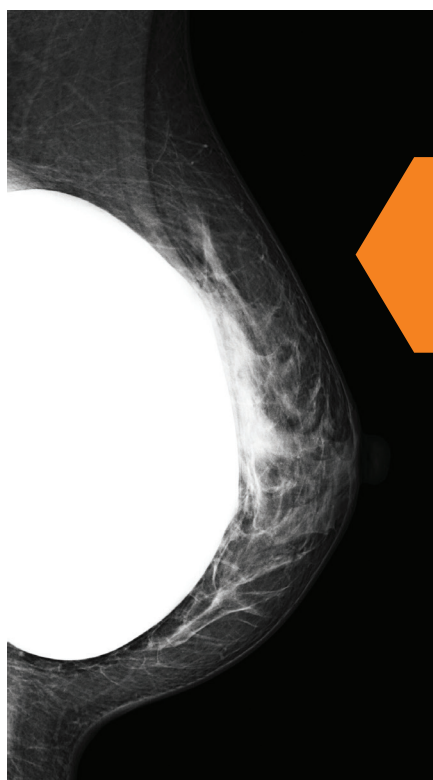


Image shows the implant in place. The implant covers some of your breast tissue.



Image shows the implant pushed back, allowing your breast tissue to be more clearly seen.

Book at  
**[breastscreen.org.au](https://breastscreen.org.au)**  
or call **13 20 50**

TTY **13 36 77** if you have hearing  
or speech difficulties



For more information or to change your details,  
visit **[breastscreen.org.au](https://breastscreen.org.au)** or call **13 20 50**



For interpreter assistance, call **13 14 50**



Translated information:  
**[breastscreen.org.au/translations](https://breastscreen.org.au/translations)**



BreastScreen Victoria acknowledges the  
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