

What is the difference between a screening and diagnostic mammogram?

This document includes information about the differences between a screening mammogram and a diagnostic mammogram.

	BreastScreen Victoria services		Diagnostic mammogram
	Screening mammogram	Further tests	
Why	Screening mammograms are the best way to find breast cancer at an early stage in people without breast symptoms.	Clients may be asked back to BreastScreen Victoria for more tests if there is an area on their breast screen that needs further investigation. This is called 'Assessment'.	Targeted low-dose x-rays of the breast are taken to investigate breast symptoms such as lumps or nipple discharge. They are also used as part of a routine follow-up for certain breast conditions.
Who	Women and eligible trans and gender diverse people aged 40 and older with no breast symptoms.	Clients whose breast x-ray images show an area that needs further investigation.	Clients of any age and sex referred by their doctor.
Where	At a BreastScreen Victoria clinic.	At a BreastScreen Victoria Reading and Assessment Service.	Public hospital diagnostic imaging departments, private medical imaging practices or breast clinics. BreastScreen Victoria does not offer diagnostic mammograms.
When	Recommended every 2 years or yearly depending on family history.	As soon as possible after a breast screen.	Usually as soon as possible. Other tests may be requested at the same appointment.
Referral	No referral needed. Clients aged 50 to 74 are sent letters reminding them to book a breast screen every two years or yearly depending on family history.	BreastScreen Victoria may contact clients approximately 2 to 6 weeks after their breast screen if further tests are required.	Doctor's referral required.
Tests	Two x-ray images of each breast for most clients.	Further tests will depend on the area that needs further investigation. They may include extra breast x-ray images, breast ultrasound, breast examination and needle core biopsy.	X-ray images of one or both breasts, reviewed by a specialist doctor to identify areas of concern. Additional breast x-ray images can be taken if required. Other tests such as breast ultrasound and needle core biopsy may be performed to reach a diagnosis.
Cost	Free.	Free.	Varies. Usually no charge at public hospitals. Private practices may offer a Medicare rebate, but a 'gap' payment may be required.
Results	Approximately 2 to 4 weeks, sent to the client and their doctor (with client consent).	Extra breast x-ray results are usually available on the day. Biopsy results can take up to 1 week. All results are sent to the client and their doctor (with client consent).	Imaging results are usually available promptly. Biopsy results can take up to 1 week. All results are sent to the referring doctor.

A mammogram is an x-ray image of the breast.

A **screening mammogram**, also known as a breast screen, is a low-dose x-ray of the breast used to check for breast cancer in women and eligible trans and gender diverse people with no breast symptoms.

A **diagnostic mammogram** is a more targeted low-dose x-ray of the breast requested by a doctor for people with breast symptoms.



Book at
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** or call **13 20 50**



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



Translated information:
breastscreen.org.au/translations



BreastScreen Victoria acknowledges the
support of the Victorian Government.