

# Is the BreastScreen Victoria program for you?

This document includes information about having a breast screen (mammogram) to detect breast cancer early.

## 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 50–74 to have a free breast screen every 2 years.

## 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.

## Why am I being invited to have a breast screen?

We invite eligible Victorians aged 50 to 74 to have a breast screen every 2 years. This is because the evidence of benefit is strongest in this age group.

For more information on your age group and eligibility, visit [breastscreen.org.au](http://breastscreen.org.au)

## Is breast screening right for me?

Everyone needs to make their own decision about breast screening. For more information about the benefits and risks of breast screening, visit [breastscreen.org.au](http://breastscreen.org.au)

If you notice any changes to your breasts, such as a new lump, nipple discharge or redness, see your doctor as soon as possible. Do not visit BreastScreen Victoria.

Some clients may need specialised care that is not part of the BreastScreen Victoria program. You may not be eligible for a breast screen with BreastScreen Victoria if you have:

- A strong family history of breast and/or ovarian cancer
- Had breast cancer within the last 5 years

Please speak to your doctor before booking an appointment if these conditions apply to you.

If you have breast implants, you can have regular breast screens every 2 years. Please advise staff when booking your appointment.

## Am I at risk?

1 in 7 women in Victoria will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.



Most people with breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease.



Ageing is the biggest risk factor for developing breast cancer.



## What will happen at my breast screen appointment?

When you arrive for your appointment, you will be welcomed by a member of our team who will explain the 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.

Your breast x-ray images will be independently reviewed by two or more specially trained health professionals. 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.

## How often should I have a breast screen?

You should have a breast screen every 2 years between age 50 to 74.

## 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.

## Will the breast screen hurt?

It is normal to feel discomfort during a 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 the radiographer to stop at any time.

## 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, see your doctor as soon as possible.

## 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.

Breast screening is your choice – and everyone is different. To help you make an informed decision on whether breast screen is right for you, visit [breastscreen.org.au](https://breastscreen.org.au) or talk to your doctor.

### Our program



Is free



Is with a woman radiographer



Takes about 10 minutes



Does not require a Medicare card or doctor's referral



Is available across Victoria

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  
support of the Victorian Government.