

Breast implants and breast screening



A breast screen every 2 years could save your life

About breast cancer

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

Key risk factors for developing breast cancer are being female and getting older² – 75% of women diagnosed with breast cancer are over 50.

The best way to find breast cancer early in women aged 50 to 74 years is to have a breast screen. If found early, breast cancer is easier to treat and there is an increased chance of survival.

About breast screening

The BreastScreen NSW program is **free** and specifically designed for women aged 50 to 74. Women are recommended to have a breast screen every two years.

Women aged 40 to 49 and over 75 are also eligible to attend. However, speak to your doctor first to see if screening is a priority for you.

Screening with breast implants

Most women who have breast implants can have regular mammograms. Before making an appointment, you may wish to discuss with your doctor if a screening mammogram is suitable for you, although you do not

need a referral from your doctor.

Please let us know about your breast implants when booking and at your appointment.

Regardless of your type of implant and where it is inserted (over or under the chest muscle), BreastScreen NSW radiographers are specially trained in obtaining the best images possible.

Mammograms for women with breast implants require more x-rays to be taken. This means there is slightly more radiation exposure than women without implants. Mammography machines use the smallest amount of radiation possible while still taking high-quality x-ray images.

A mammogram is the most effective test for finding breast cancer early in women aged 50 to 74, including those with implants

Your appointment – what to expect

- ✓ Your appointment will take around 20 minutes.
- ✓ When you arrive, the receptionist will ask you to complete registration and consent forms. Please let the receptionist know you have breast implants.
- ✓ A female radiographer will take you to a private room where you can remove your top and bra.
- ✓ During your mammogram the radiographer will take images of each breast. This compression may be uncomfortable, but it is only for a brief time.
- ✓ If you feel any discomfort, inform your radiographer. You can stop the mammogram at any time.

BreastScreen NSW recommends you stay breast aware in between appointments

- 1 Get to know your breasts and what is normal for you. Look at your breasts in the mirror and feel your breasts regularly.
- 2 If you notice any changes in your breasts (i.e. lumps, nipple discharge or persistent new breast pain) see your doctor straight away.

Please note, a mammogram is the best way of detecting breast cancer early, but no screening test is 100% accurate. For more information, please visit breastscreen.nsw.gov.au/limitations.

1 Annual NSW cancer incidence and mortality data set, 2016 Cancer Institute NSW. <https://www.cancer.nsw.gov.au/understanding-cancer/cancer-in-nsw/data-calculations>

2 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2018. BreastScreen Australia monitoring report 2018. Cancer series no. 112. Cat. no. CAN 116. Canberra: AIHW.

! Remember to advise BreastScreen NSW if you have breast implants when you book.

Book your free breast screen today, call 13 20 50
For interpreter assistance call 13 14 50 (TTY 13 36 77)
Find us on Facebook facebook.com/BreastScreenNSW

Questions you may have:

Will mammograms damage breast implants?

During your mammogram, the radiographer uses imaging techniques so that minimal compression is applied to the implant. There is a very small chance the mammogram could break up scar tissue that has grown around your implant. If you are concerned about this, please talk to your doctor ahead of your screening.

If I have breast implants, am I more likely to develop breast cancer?

Currently, there is no evidence that women with breast implants are more likely to develop primary breast cancer. Some implants have been linked to the development of a very rare lymphoma.

The Government continues to review and assess breast implants available in the Australian market. For more information visit tga.gov.au/hubs/breast-implants.

Should I book an appointment with BreastScreen NSW if I have concerns about my implants?

The purpose of the BreastScreen NSW program is to provide screening services to detect breast cancer early, not to check breast implants for other problems. If you are concerned about your breast implant, you should see your doctor.

