

Reduce your risk

- * **Maintain a healthy body weight** – strive to keep your waistline to less than 85 cm
- * **Eat well** – a healthy diet will help you maintain a healthy body weight
- * **Limit your alcohol intake**, or better still, avoid it altogether
- * **Keep active** – exercise for 30 to 60 minutes each day.

 **Cancer Council
Helpline**
13 11 20
www.cancervic.org.au



Finding breast cancer early



**Every woman's guide
to breast health**

Be breast aware

- * Get to know the normal look and feel of your breasts
- * See your doctor if you notice any unusual changes
- * If you are aged 50 to 69, have a free mammogram at BreastScreen every two years.

More women survive breast cancer today thanks to early detection and better treatments.

However, it is still the most common cancer among Australian women, with about 12,000 women diagnosed each year.

Know what's normal for you

It's important to be familiar with the look and feel of your breasts and to know what's normal for you. That way you are more likely to notice any unusual changes which could be, but are not always, a sign of breast cancer.

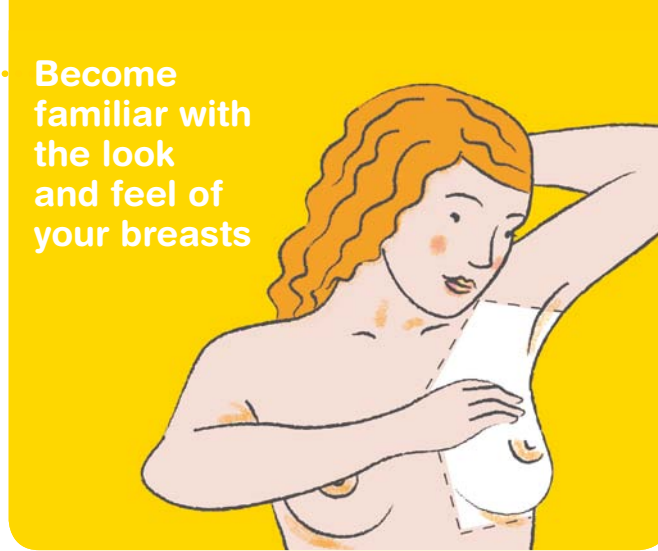
There is no right or wrong way to examine your breasts – it's important to find a way that works for you.

The following tips may help:

- > Use a mirror to get to know the usual look and shape of your breasts.
- > Become familiar with the feel of your breasts at different times of the month. You might find this easiest in the shower or bath, lying in bed, or getting dressed.
- > Feel all the breast tissue, from the collarbone to below the bra line, and under the armpit.
- > Use the pads of your fingers to feel near the surface and deeper in the breast.

Women of all ages should be familiar with their breasts, but it becomes more important as you get older because the risk of breast cancer increases with age.

Become familiar with the look and feel of your breasts



Changes to look for

Many breast cancers are found by a woman or her doctor after noticing a change in the breast. See your doctor straight away if you feel or see any of the following:

- > A lump, lumpiness or thickening in the breast or armpit.
- > Changes in the skin – dimpling, puckering or redness.
- > Changes in the nipple – pointing in rather than out (unless it has always been this way), a change in direction or an unusual discharge.
- > An area that feels different from the rest.
- > Unusual pain.

Nine out of 10 breast changes are not breast cancer; however, it is important to have any changes checked out straight away by your doctor.

Breast cancer risk

Being a woman and getting older are the most important risk factors for breast cancer. More than 70% of cases occur in women over 50. While breast cancer is less common in women younger than 40, it is important for all women to be breast aware. Other factors which increase your risk include having one or more first-degree relatives (mother, sister or daughter) who have had breast or ovarian cancer, particularly before the age of 50, or if you have had breast or ovarian cancer in the past.

Making changes to your lifestyle such as limiting or avoiding alcohol, being physically active and maintaining a healthy weight can help to reduce your risk of breast cancer.

Adopting a healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk



Breast cancer screening

Breast screening is the best way to find breast cancer before it can be felt or noticeable symptoms develop.

In Australia, all women aged 50 to 69 are invited to have a free screening mammogram (breast X-ray) at BreastScreen every two years. It is the best early detection tool we have for reducing deaths from breast cancer.

Screening mammograms can find most breast cancers present at the time of screening but like all medical screening tests, mammograms are not perfect. Some women might undergo further testing or treatment for changes which are not due to breast cancer or, for a small number of women, a breast cancer that is present may not be detected.

Some breast cancers can develop between mammograms, which is why being breast aware is so important.

Based on the best available evidence, it is recommended that women aged 50 to 69, without breast symptoms or changes, participate in the BreastScreen Australia program. However, women should make an informed, personal choice about participating in screening. If you are unsure about your risk of breast cancer or whether breast screening mammograms should be a priority, you should speak to your doctor.

Although women in their 40s and over 70 are outside the BreastScreen program's target age range, they are still at risk of breast cancer and are eligible for free screening mammograms with BreastScreen Australia every two years.

Book an appointment with BreastScreen by calling 13 20 50 or visit www.breastscreen.org.au for more information.