

What if I find a breast change?

See your doctor, community health nurse or Aboriginal health worker as soon as possible.

In most cases the change will not be breast cancer, but if it is, finding it early means you have more treatment options and a greater chance of recovery.

Your health is in your hands so remember:

- Become familiar with the normal look and feel of your breasts.
- See your doctor, community health nurse or Aboriginal health worker if you notice an unusual change in your breasts.
- Maintain a healthy weight, eat a healthy diet and be active every day.
- Limit or avoid alcohol.
- Have a mammogram every two years if you are aged over 50.

Cancer Council would like to thank the Aboriginal health workers who provided feedback in producing this brochure.

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Ngootyoong koong, tarratya peem, wirreeyeearr.
(Healthy body, mind, spirit)

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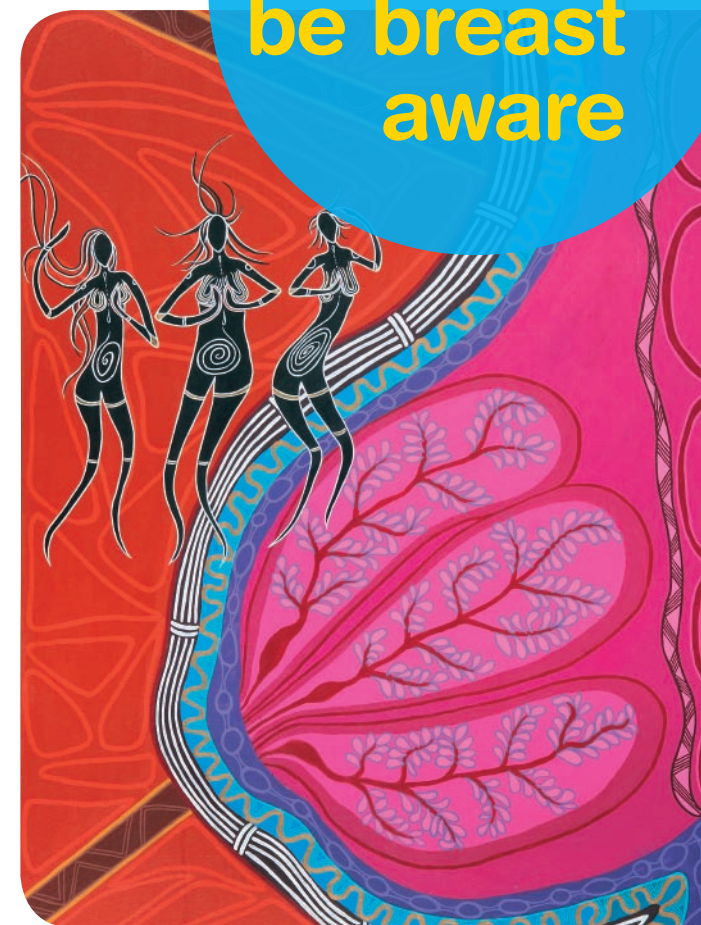
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A guide for
Aboriginal
women

Take
the lead:
be breast
aware



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



Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Aboriginal women in Victoria. But, if caught early, your chance of survival is much greater.

Staying healthy by knowing your own body and having regular mammograms can help you find breast cancer early.

This brochure has information to help you stay healthy and strong for you, your family and your community.

What causes breast cancer?

We don't know exactly what causes breast cancer. However some risk factors can increase your chance of developing the disease. These are:

- being a woman
- being over 50
- having a mother, sister or daughter with breast or ovarian cancer, especially before the age of 50
- having had breast or ovarian cancer in the past
- drinking alcohol
- having a waistline bigger than 85cm
- an inactive lifestyle.



How can I reduce my risk?

You can reduce your chance of breast cancer by having a healthy, active lifestyle. Here are some tips:

- **eat well** – a healthy diet can help you get to and maintain a healthy weight and a waistline of 85cm or less
- **limit your alcohol intake**, or better still, avoid it altogether
- **keep active** – try to do one hour of moderate exercise like walking, or half an hour of vigorous exercise like jogging, every day.

When should I have a mammogram?

BreastScreen Victoria invites women aged 50 to 69 to have a free screening mammogram every two years. A screening mammogram is an x-ray of the breast tissue that looks for the early signs of cancer.

Finding cancer early gives you a better chance of successful treatment and recovery.

Making an appointment with BreastScreen Victoria is as easy as calling **13 20 50** (for the cost of a local call). Your local health worker can make the appointment for you and group bookings are available. It is okay to bring a friend or family member to your appointment.

Women aged 40 to 49 and those over 70 who would like to use this free service can also make an appointment.

How well do you know your own body?

It is important to know what your breasts normally feel and look like. That way you will be more aware of any unusual changes which could be a sign of breast cancer.

It is normal for your breasts to feel different and change shape over different times of the month due to hormonal changes. Therefore, you should feel and look at your breasts at different times so you know what is normal for you.

What changes should I be aware of?

You need to look out for these breast changes:

- a lump, lumpiness or thickening in your breast or armpit
- weeping from your nipple
- a change in the breast such as dimpling of the skin
- a change to the nipple shape or colour
- pain in the breast that will not go away
- a change in the shape or size of one breast.

