

# Breast awareness for all women

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## Be breast aware

Our breasts change throughout our lives. Being aware of the changes and learning how your breasts feel at different times will help you to understand what is normal for you. If you are familiar with your breasts you may be more likely to notice any unusual changes that could be a sign of breast cancer.

## To be breast aware:

1. Get to know your breasts and what's normal for you by looking at them and feeling them.
2. See a doctor if you notice any unusual changes.
3. If you are aged 50–69, have a mammogram (breast x-ray) at BreastScreen every two years.

## Get to know your breasts

Get to know your breasts, and what's normal for you. What do they look and feel like?

- Look in the mirror, and feel your breasts from time to time.
- Feel them while you're in the shower or bath, lying in bed, or getting dressed. It should only take a few minutes.
- Remember to feel all the breast tissue, from the collarbone to below the bra-line, and under the armpit.
- Use the flat part of your fingers and the finger pads to feel near the surface, and deeper in the breast.

There is no right or wrong way to feel your breasts. These points are just suggestions. You may find a way that works better for you.

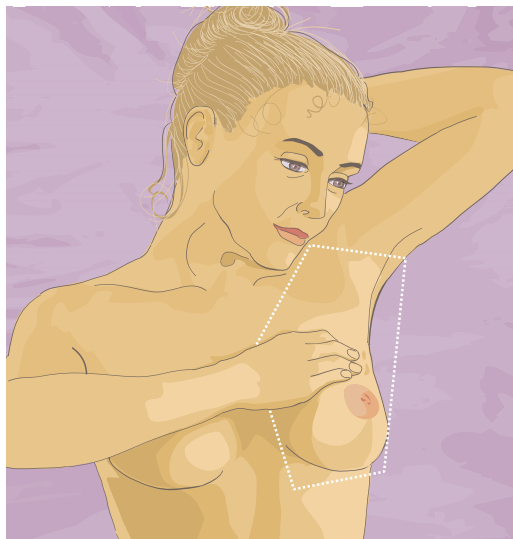
If you are still having your periods, expect your breasts to feel different at different times of the month. For example, it may be normal for your breasts to be painful, lumpier or swollen just before your period, and softer after your period.

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

## See a doctor if you notice any unusual breast changes

No matter how old you are, see your doctor straight away if you feel or see any of the following changes:

- 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.



► *English*

## Cancer information line:

- English  
13 11 20

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Your doctor will examine your breasts and ask about your medical history. He or she can then arrange different tests to find out what has caused the breast change. You may be referred to have a mammogram, ultrasound or biopsy – this involves taking cells from the breast for testing. Ask your doctor what has caused the change. If you don't understand, make sure you say so. In most cases the breast change will have been caused by something harmless.

## Mammograms at BreastScreen

Screening mammograms look for early breast cancers in women without breast symptoms.

BreastScreen Victoria is a breast cancer screening program offering free mammography (breast x-rays) to women aged 50–69.

If you are 50–69, have a free BreastScreen mammogram every two years.

This is the best way to find breast cancer early.

Regular screening mammograms can reduce the number of women who die from breast cancer.

To book your appointment with BreastScreen phone 13 20 50 (for the cost of a local call). For more information about the BreastScreen program visit [www.breastscreen.org.au](http://www.breastscreen.org.au) or call 13 20 50.

## Remember, be breast aware

- Get to know what your breasts normally look and feel like.
- See a doctor straight away if you notice any unusual changes.
- If you are 50–69, have a mammogram at BreastScreen every two years.



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