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Scan QR code or
visit our website.



Or call us on 13 20 50

Free interpreter services are available.

More information

BreastScreen SA

Central Adelaide Local Health Network
SA Health

Book online: www.breastscreen.sa.gov.au/book

Call us: 13 20 50

Email us: HelloBSSA@sa.gov.au

If you do not speak English, request an interpreter from SA Health and the Department will make every effort to provide you with an interpreter in your language.

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Do you know about free screening for breast cancer?



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What's included

About BreastScreen SA

1

Who is BreastScreen SA?

Is BreastScreen SA right for you?

Breast cancer screening and eligibility

2-3

What is a breast screen?

Who can have a breast screen?

Where do I go for a breast screen appointment?

What happens at your breast screen

4-6

What will happen at my appointment?

Does having a breast screen hurt?

How are my results decided?

What if I need further tests?

What if I have breast cancer?

Risks, benefits and limitations

7-9

Are there radiation risks?

What are the risk factors for breast cancer?

What are the benefits of regular breast screening?

What are the limitations and risks of breast screening?

Breast density and breast awareness

10-13

What is breast density?

Why is breast awareness important?

Booking your breast screen

14

How do I make an appointment with BreastScreen SA?

Practical tips to make your visit more comfortable

More information and clinics

15

About BreastScreen SA

1

Who is BreastScreen SA?

BreastScreen SA provides free breast screens (breast X-rays) every 2 years, primarily for women aged 50 to 74.

Breast screens can detect breast cancer at an early stage, often before symptoms can be felt. The earlier breast cancer is found, the easier it can be to treat.

BreastScreen SA is part of BreastScreen Australia, the national breast cancer screening program for women without breast cancer symptoms. We have been providing services since 1989.

A breast screen is free, and you do not need a doctor's referral to make an appointment.

Is BreastScreen SA right for you?

BreastScreen SA provides breast screening for all eligible South Australian women aged over 40. However, some women may need different care and services that are not part of screening.

This includes women who:

- have breast symptoms (such as a lump, nipple discharge or change in their breasts)
- have a strong family history of breast and/or ovarian cancer
- have a previous diagnosis of breast cancer within the last 5 years
- have restricted upper body movement or have difficulty holding or supporting their own weight.

Speak with your doctor or phone BreastScreen SA on 13 20 50 to make sure you receive the most suitable care and service for you.

What is a breast screen?

A breast screen is a screening mammogram (a low dose X-ray of the breast), for women who have no breast symptoms, such as a lump, nipple discharge, or change in the breast that is unusual.

Screening mammography involves taking at least 2 images of each breast - one from the top and one from the side. It is currently the most effective screening test for undetected breast cancer.

If a woman has a breast symptom, she may need a diagnostic mammogram. A diagnostic mammogram involves more detailed images of the breast to allow doctors to assess the symptom. Some cancers do not show on a mammogram, so other detailed tests may be needed.

This is why breast screens are only appropriate for women who have **no breast symptoms**.



Who can have a breast screen?

BreastScreen SA invites women aged 50 to 74 to have a breast screen every 2 years. Evidence suggests regular screening is most effective in this age group.

Women aged 40 to 49 and over 75 years can also make an appointment for a free breast screen, but are strongly encouraged to speak with their doctor when deciding if breast screening is right for them.

Breast screening is not an effective screening test for women under the age of 40. While breast cancer can occur at any age, it is much less frequent in women under the age of 40.

Women who have a strong family history of breast cancer can have a breast screen every year from the age of 40.

For information on screening for different age groups and for strong family history information, visit the BreastScreen SA website.

Where do I go for a breast screen appointment?

BreastScreen SA has 8 fixed clinics within the Adelaide metropolitan area, and 3 mobile screening units that visit rural, remote, outer-metropolitan and some metropolitan areas every 2 years.

Locations of our fixed and mobile clinics can be found on our website.

What will happen at my appointment?

Please arrive 10 minutes early to your appointment to give yourself plenty of time to complete your consent form and to ask questions. Please also remember to bring your Medicare card with you.

One of our friendly receptionists will check your full name, date of birth and address details with you to ensure they are correct and that we are screening the right person.

A specialist female radiographer will then take you into the screening room and you will need to undress from the waist up. You can drape your shirt or cardigan over your shoulders if you wish, or disposable gowns are available upon request.

When you are ready, the radiographer will place one breast at a time on to the mammography machine. The machine will firmly press on your breast for 10-15 seconds to take the image. Usually 2 images of each breast are taken, one from the top and one from the side. Women with larger breasts may need additional images to ensure all the breast tissue can be seen. Once your images are taken, you'll be able to get dressed and your appointment will be finished.

Your images are not read at the time of your appointment, the radiographer performing your mammogram will check your images for technical quality only.

Your images are sent to our State Coordination Unit in Adelaide where they will be independently read by at least 2 specialist radiologists.

Does having a breast screen hurt?

Many women are concerned that a breast screen will be painful. The truth is every woman is different. Some say it's uncomfortable, some say it's a little painful, and other women report that it's absolutely fine. If you feel discomfort it should only last a few seconds. This is because your breasts need to be compressed firmly in the X-ray machine so that a clear image can be taken (if you do find it too painful). You can stop the procedure at any time, please speak with the radiographer during your appointment if you are concerned.

Are there radiation risks?

Each time you have a mammogram, you are exposed to a very small dose of radiation. Our mammography units use the smallest dose of radiation possible to take a high-quality image. The dose is similar to many other common X-rays people have, and is further minimised by the compression of the breast. Research shows that the benefits of breast cancer screening outweigh the radiation risks.

How are my results decided?

After your breast screen, your images will be read by at least 2 independent radiologists. Depending on their findings, you will be given one result: either 'no evidence of breast cancer' or 'recall for further tests'.

Your results are usually posted to you and your nominated doctor within 14 days of your appointment. As this test only looks for breast cancer, any non-cancerous (benign) changes are not reported on.

What if I need further tests?

Around 5% of women screened will be asked to come back to BreastScreen SA for more tests. This does not mean that you have breast cancer, but sometimes more tests are needed to make sure. This happens more often for women having their first breast screen, as there are no previous mammogram images to compare with. Something that might look unusual on your first mammogram might be completely normal.

Women are invited back to our dedicated Assessment Clinic in Adelaide, where they will have more detailed tests, including mammography, ultrasound, and in some cases a biopsy. This can be a very anxious experience and our specialised team of health professionals will ensure you are as comfortable as possible during your visit.

Most women who have further tests are reassured they do not have breast cancer. They are then reinvited for their next breast screen when it is due.

What if I have breast cancer?

A small number of women (less than 1% of all South Australian women screened) will receive a diagnosis of breast cancer after their Assessment Clinic appointment. Our specialist team of health professionals will guide you through this process and explain what will happen next.

While BreastScreen SA does not treat women for breast cancer, we will help you arrange your future care needs by contacting your doctor. Your doctor will discuss your specialist referrals, treatment and follow-up choices with you.

For more information about breast cancer, you can visit the Cancer Australia website.

What are the risk factors for breast cancer?

There are a number of factors that can increase your individual risk of developing breast cancer. These include personal factors such as being female, your age, if you've had a previous diagnosis of breast cancer, your individual breast density and your family history. Others are lifestyle factors such as your diet, how often you exercise, if you smoke or regularly drink alcohol. If you want to assess your risk, you can speak with your doctor or use the online questionnaire at:

www.breastcancerrisk.canceraustralia.gov.au

What are the benefits of regular breast screening?

Finding breast cancer at an early stage

In 2008, local research found that South Australian women aged 50 to 69, who had a breast screen every 2 years, reduced their chance of dying from breast cancer by up to 41%.*

Less invasive treatment

For every 1000 women who have a breast screen, only 6 women will be found to have breast cancer. Breast cancers that are detected through BreastScreen SA are generally smaller, making them easier to treat. A woman's overall health outcome is also improved.

Reassurance

Most women who have a breast screen will get a result of 'no evidence of breast cancer' and will feel reassured they are being proactive in maintaining their breast health.

BreastScreen SA (2010). The impact of BreastScreen SA, 20 year report 1989-2008: with trend data for 1989-2004, Central Northern Adelaide Health Service, SA Health, Government of South Australia, Adelaide.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018). Analysis of cancer outcomes and screening behaviour for national cancer screening programs in Australia. Cancer series no. 111. Cat. no. CAN 115 Canberra: AIHW.

What are the limitations & risks of breast screening?

While screening mammograms are currently the most effective way for screening for breast cancer, there are limitations you need to be aware of.

Breast cancer is present but not found

A screening mammogram will not detect all breast cancers. Some cancers cannot be seen on a screening mammogram or can develop during the time between mammograms. There is a small chance that a cancer could be missed on a screening mammogram. This may lead to a diagnosis of breast cancer at a later stage.

Less than 1 in 1000 women aged 50 to 74 will be found to have breast cancer in the 12 months following their breast screen.

Other factors contributing to the effectiveness of screening mammograms can include a woman's age and her individual breast density.

Breast cancer is found and treated unnecessarily (overdiagnosis)

Breast screening may also find breast cancers that may potentially not become life-threatening. This means a woman may elect to be treated for a cancer that may never be harmful to her, however the treatment itself may cause her harm.

It is not yet possible to tell exactly which breast cancers may become life-threatening and which may not.

Further tests are done, but breast cancer is not found

If an area of concern or a change in your breast tissue is found on your screening mammogram, you will be called back to BreastScreen SA's Assessment Clinic for further tests.

These tests will include further mammography, ultrasound and possibly a clinical breast examination or biopsy. While this may be an anxious time for women, most will be reassured they do not have breast cancer.



What is breast density?

A woman's breast is made up of both fatty tissue and non-fatty tissue. On a mammogram, fatty tissue appears black while the remaining breast tissue appears white or 'dense'. The relative amount of non-fatty (white areas) on a mammogram is referred to as breast density.

As breast cancers also appear as white areas on a mammogram, high breast density may potentially hide some cancers, interfering with the accuracy of mammograms.

Despite this, screening mammography is still the best population-based breast cancer screening test for women aged 50 to 74, including those with dense breasts.

Dense breasts are common and normal occurring in about one-third of women over 50 years of age.

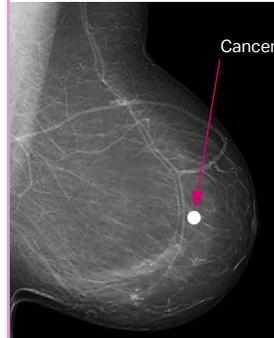
All women who screen at BreastScreen SA receive their individual breast density category in their results letter.

More information about breast density can be found on our website.

Breast density categories as measured using the Breast Imaging Reporting and Data System (BI-RADS)*

BI-RADS a

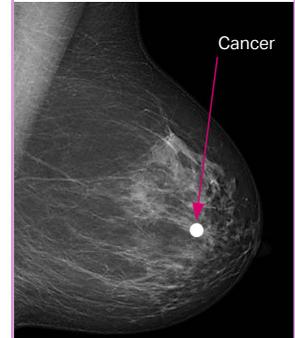
Around 10% of women



Breasts are almost entirely fatty tissue.

BI-RADS b

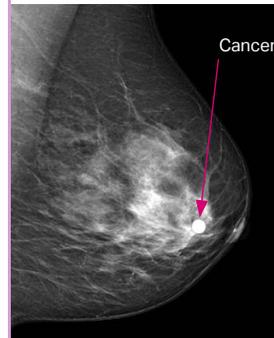
Around 40% of women



Breasts have scattered areas of fibroglandular tissue.

BI-RADS c

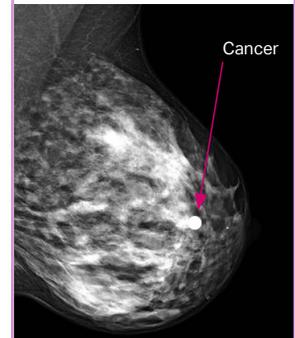
Around 40% of women



Breasts are heterogeneously dense. The mix of non-dense and dense tissue may hide small cancers.

BI-RADS d

Around 10% of women



Breasts are extremely dense, which can reduce the visibility of cancers on a mammogram.

*BI-RADS 5th Atlas

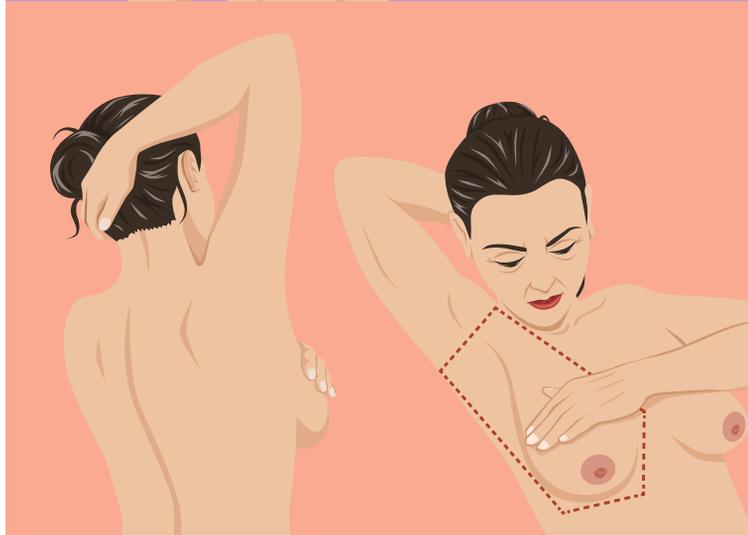
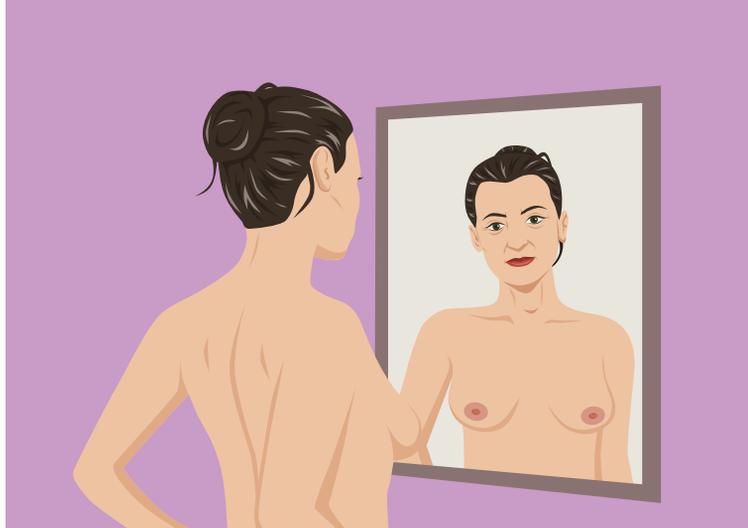
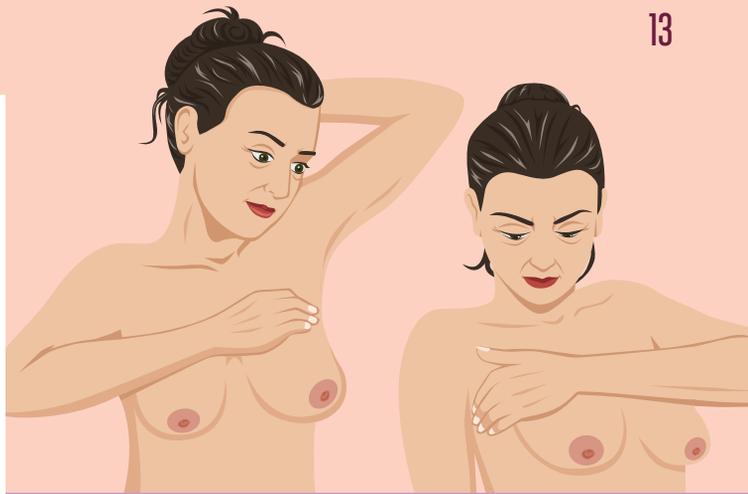
Why is breast awareness important?

Even if you have 2-yearly breast screens, it is still important to be breast aware because breast cancer can develop at any time. This includes the time in-between screening appointments.

It is important to know the normal look and feel of your breasts. Things you should look for include:

- a new lump or lumpiness in your breasts, especially if it is in only one breast
- a change in the size and shape of your breast
- a change to the nipple such as crusting, an ulcer, redness or the nipple pulled in
- a discharge from your nipple that happens without squeezing the nipple
- a change in the skin of your breast such as redness or dimpling or puckered skin
- a pain that does not go away.

Most breast changes will not be due to breast cancer but you should get them checked to be sure. If you notice a change in the look or feel of your breasts, even if your screening mammogram was normal, see your doctor without delay.



How do I make an appointment with BreastScreen SA?

Book your appointment online now!

Book online!

Scan QR code or
visit our website.



Alternatively, you can call BreastScreen SA on 13 20 50 to make an appointment. Please note that we will need to ask you a number of personal health questions when you book, so please make sure you have the time and the privacy to answer those when you call.

A doctor's referral is not needed. Free interpreter services and wheelchair access are available.

Practical tips to make your visit more comfortable

- Please don't wear talcum powder or deodorant on the day of your appointment as it may affect your breast screen.
- Wear a 2-piece outfit as you will need to remove your bra and top during the breast screen.
- Remember to bring your Medicare Card with you to your appointment, as well as your completed and signed consent form.
- Arrive 10 minutes before your appointment time so we can process your paperwork.
- If you have had a mammogram elsewhere, let our staff know.
- If you have any questions please ask our friendly staff.

Useful links, references and further reading

BreastScreen SA

www.breastscreen.sa.gov.au

Cancer Australia

www.canceraustralia.gov.au

Breast cancer risk calculator

www.breastcancerrisk.canceraustralia.gov.au

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

www.aihw.gov.au

A Guide to Breast Health – *Information for women living with a disability or low literacy*

www.breastscreen.sa.gov.au

BreastScreen SA clinic locations

We have 8 fixed clinics at Arndale, Christies Beach, David Jones Rundle Mall, Elizabeth, Frome Road, Hyde Park, Marion and Mount Barker.

Mobile screening units

Our 3 mobile screening units visit rural, remote, metropolitan and outer-metropolitan areas every 2 years. Please visit our website to see locations and visit details.

BreastScreen SA locations

www.breastscreen.sa.gov.au/our-locations