



About Breast Screening



This is a Plain English information leaflet about Breast Screening.

What is BreastCheck?

BreastCheck is the breast screening programme in Ireland.

The Government pay for this health service. You do not have to pay to use the service. It is free.

BreastCheck will give you information about our screening programme.

We will communicate with you in a clear way.

We will tell you the truth.

What is Breast Cancer?

Cancer is a serious disease that people can get. It can stop your body from working properly.

Cancer can be in different parts of your body. You can get cancer in your breasts.

There are different kinds of breast cancer.

Breast cancer can spread to other parts of the body.

Women of any age can get breast cancer.

Men can get breast cancer too but only a few do.

You have more chance of getting breast cancer:

- if you are a woman over 50 years of age
- if people in your family have had breast cancer.

What is Breast Screening?

Breast screening is for healthy women with no breast symptoms.

A symptom is a sign of an illness or disease.

Screening is a way to check if your breasts are healthy.

Breast screening can save lives.

It is quick. It does not take up much time.

Breast screening means taking an x-ray of your breasts.

This is called a mammogram.

A special x-ray machine takes pictures of all of your breast.

It takes these pictures from different sides.

Breast screening does not stop breast cancer. It looks for early signs of breast cancer.

It can show breast cancers when they are too small for you or your doctor to see or feel.

Who is Breast Screening for?

Every woman aged between 50 and 69 can have a free mammogram with BreastCheck.

BreastCheck puts together a list of all women offered an appointment for a mammogram.

This is called a register.

Women on the register can have a mammogram every two years.

You can contact us to check if you are on the register.

Having a mammogram

It is important that you tell us if you need support to move around or have a disability.

You may need extra time for your appointment.

It is important that you tell us if you have breast implants.

You will need extra time for your appointment.

If you have any questions, please call the BreastCheck unit number that is on your appointment letter.

There is more information about going for a mammogram in our photo story and video.

Where do I go for my mammogram?

It depends on where you live.

You will be sent a BreastCheck letter inviting you to a BreastCheck building or mobile unit.

This letter will tell you where to go.

All BreastCheck buildings and mobile units are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Important things to know

Radiation

During the mammogram, some radiation goes into your body.

Radiation is energy that you cannot see.

You only get a small amount during the mammogram.

More tests

Sometimes we need to take a closer look at something on a mammogram.

For some people, this closer look might turn out to be normal.

You may have worried for no reason.

Missed cancers

Not all cancers can be seen on a mammogram.

You could get a normal result, but a cancer is there.

Cancers can happen between appointments

You can get breast cancer at any time.

You could get breast cancer between your screening appointments.

These cancers are rare. They do not happen very often.

Important things to know

These problems happen with breast screening programmes all over the world.

We cannot stop them from happening.

There are some good things and bad things about having a mammogram. It is your choice.

It is important that you keep checking your breasts.

If cancer in your breast is found early, it is easier to treat.

You will have more treatment choices and more chance of getting better.

It is important that you keep checking your breasts.

Talk to your GP if you have any worries or find any changes on your breasts.

Breast Screening - Your Choice

The first time you have a mammogram, we will ask you to sign a consent form.

When you give consent, you agree that we can do a special x-ray of your breasts.

You agree that we can keep information about you.

Each time you get an appointment, you decide if you want to have a mammogram.

You can get more information before you make your decision.

You can talk to the person doing your x-ray about consent and ask questions.

This person is called a radiographer.

You have to give your own consent to be part of our programme.

No-one else can give consent for you.

It might help you to talk about BreastCheck with your family and friends.
It might help to talk with someone who has already had a mammogram.

You can change your mind about a BreastCheck appointment.

Breast Screening - Your Choice

You can tell the radiographer to stop anytime you want during the mammogram.

If you do not want to take part in BreastCheck, phone us and tell us. We will take you off our list and will not contact you again.

You will need to ring us if you want to go back on the list for a mammogram.

For more information about breast screening, see www.breastcheck.ie

Phone us free on 1800 45 45 55

Looking after your information

BreastCheck keeps your information safe and private.

We follow the laws on looking after your personal information.

Staying Healthy

A healthy lifestyle is very important.

To cut down your chances of breast cancer:

- Exercise
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Do not drink too much alcohol.

More information

www.breastcheck.ie

Phone us free on 1800 45 45 55

The photo on the cover was taken by Pauline
Dennigan Photography



Kerry Parents and Friends Association



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

