

# General Terminology in Breast Screening

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The General Terminology in Breast Screening guide has been developed to assist in the understanding of specialist medical terms commonly used in the field of breast screening, breast cancer and its subsequent treatment. The explanations given in this guide have been carefully selected from accredited sources.

For ease of use, the terms are listed in alphabetical order.

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## **Assessment**

Further investigation of a mammographic abnormality or symptom reported at screening. BreastCheck offers a triple assessment approach which is a combination of clinical examination, additional imagery (mammography or ultrasound) and biopsy.

## **Benign**

Not cancerous. Cannot invade neighbouring tissues or spread to other parts of the body.

## **Benign breast changes**

Non cancerous changes in the breast.

## **Biopsy**

The removal of a sample of tissue or cells for examination under a microscope. Biopsy is used to aid diagnosis.

## **Cancer**

A general name for more than 100 diseases in which abnormal cells grow out of control. Cancer cells can invade and destroy healthy tissues and can spread to other parts of the body.

## **Carcinoma**

Cancer that begins in tissues lining or covering the surfaces of organs, glands or other body structures.

## **Clinical breast exam**

A physical exam by a doctor or nurse of the breast, underarm and collarbone area.

## **Cytology**

Examination of cells or tissues under a microscope for evidence of cancer.

## **Ductal Carcinoma in Situ (DCIS)**

Cancer that is confined to the ducts of the breast tissue.

## **Eligible women**

The known target population less those women excluded or suspended by the programme based on certain eligibility criteria.

## **Excluded**

Women in follow-up care for breast cancer, not contactable by An Post, physical / mental incapacity (while BreastCheck attempts to screen all eligible women, certain forms of physical or mental incapacity may preclude screening), terminal illness, other.

## **First invited population**

Women who have been invited by BreastCheck for a screening appointment for the first time in a screening round.

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**Initial screening**

A woman's first screening mammogram at a BreastCheck unit.

**Invasive cancer**

Cancer that has spread to nearby tissue, lymph nodes under the arm or other parts of the body.

**Known target population**

All women of screening age that are known to the programme.

**Malignancy**

Cancer. Malignant tumours can invade surrounding tissues and spread to other parts of the body.

**Mammogram**

An x-ray of the breast.

**Mortality**

A death.

**Oncology**

The study of cancer. An oncologist is a specialist in cancer and cancer treatments.

**Previous non-attenders**

Women who did not attend their BreastCheck screening appointment in the previous screening round/s.

**Radiologist**

A doctor with special training in the field of diagnostic imaging.

**Risk**

A measure of the likelihood of some uncertain or random event with negative consequences for human life or health.

**Screening mammogram**

Breast x-ray used to look for signs of disease such as cancer in women who are symptom free. Used to detect a breast cancer at an earlier stage than would otherwise be the case.

**Standardised detection ratio**

An age-standardised measure in which the observed number of invasive breast cancers detected is compared with the number which would have been expected.

**Subsequent screening**

A screening mammogram when a woman has attended a previous BreastCheck screening appointment.

**Suspended**

Women on extended vacation / working abroad, women who have had a mammogram less than a year previously, women who opt to wait for the next screening round, women who wished to defer their appointment, other.

**Symptom**

Any evidence of disease.

**Tumour**

An abnormal growth of tissue. Tumours may be either benign or malignant.

