



# About Breast Screening



**This is a Plain English information leaflet about  
Breast Screening.**

# What is BreastCheck?

BreastCheck is the breast screening programme in Ireland.

It is part of the National Screening Service.

The Government pays for this health service.

You do not have to pay to use the service. It is free.

# 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 can find cancer early and give people more chance of getting better.

Breast screening 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 BreastCheck for?

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

BreastCheck makes a list of everyone 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

If you are on the register, you will be sent a letter inviting you to a BreastCheck building or mobile unit.

This letter will tell you where to go and when to go.

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

We have a photo story and video about having a mammogram. They tell you what happens when you go for this test.

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. This is on your appointment letter.

# Important Things to Know

BreastCheck will give you information about our screening programme.

We will communicate with you in a clear way.

We will tell you the truth.

You will be asked for consent every time you have a mammogram.

Please see our leaflet on giving consent for screening tests.

It might help to talk about BreastCheck with your family and friends.

It might help to talk to someone who has had a mammogram.

BreastCheck keeps your information safe and private.

Please read our leaflet on looking after your information.

Breast screening can save lives, but no screening test is perfect.

Please see our leaflet on the benefits and harms of screening for more information.

Breast cancers can happen between screening appointments, so it is important to keep checking your breasts.

We have a leaflet that tells you how to do this.

# Important Things to Know

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

During the mammogram, a small amount of radiation goes into your body.

Radiation is energy that you cannot see.

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

You need to have more tests so we can do this.

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

You may have worried for no reason.



# Getting your Result

BreastCheck will send you a letter with your results in around 3 weeks.

Your doctor will get a copy of this letter.

Most women that have a mammogram get a normal result.

These women should keep going to their screening appointments when they are invited.

We will tell you if you need more tests.

# 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](http://www.breastcheck.ie)

[Info@breastcheck.ie](mailto:Info@breastcheck.ie)

Phone us free on 1800 45 45 55

The photo on the cover was taken by Pauline  
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*Kerry Parents and Friends Association*



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála  
National Screening Service

