

Want to know more?

A free education session is available for community groups and workplaces.

This session provides key prevention and early detection messages for women to reduce their risk of cancer and maintain health. Contact the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20 for further information or to make a booking. Availability of speakers may be limited in some regions.



Finding breast cancer early

Every woman's guide to breast cancer.



For information and support call
Monday to Friday, 8am – 8pm

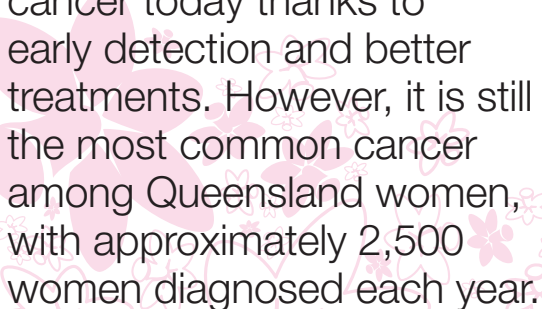
www.cancerqld.org.au

PE011483 01/10

Be breast aware.

- ▶ Get to know the normal look and feel of your breasts.
- ▶ See your doctor if you notice any unusual changes.
- ▶ If you are aged 50 to 69, have a free screening mammogram at BreastScreen Queensland every two years.

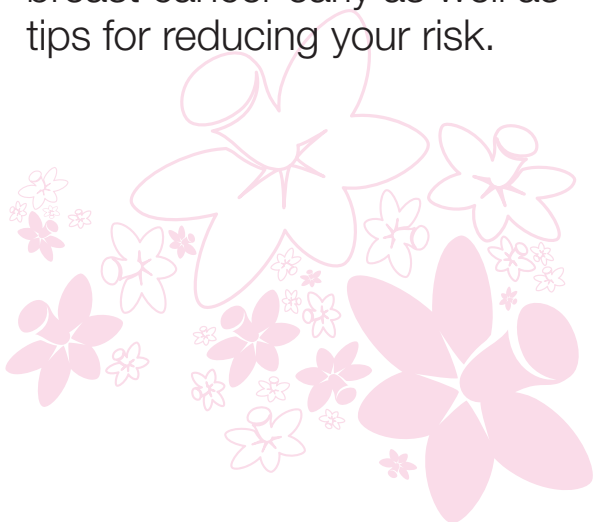
More women survive breast cancer today thanks to early detection and better treatments. However, it is still the most common cancer among Queensland women, with approximately 2,500 women diagnosed each year.



Reduce your risk.

- ▶ Limit your alcohol intake, or better still, avoid alcohol altogether.
- ▶ Keep active – exercise for at least 30 to 60 minutes each day.
- ▶ Eat well – a healthy diet will help you maintain a healthy body weight.

This leaflet contains essential information about finding breast cancer early as well as tips for reducing your risk.

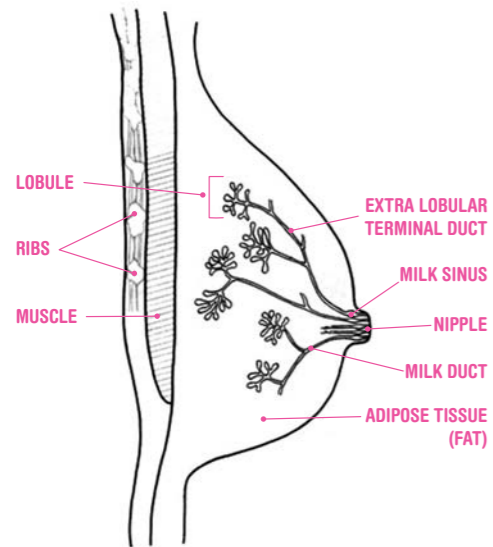




One in eight Queensland women will develop breast cancer at some stage in their life.

About your breasts

Breasts are glandular organs that produce milk after pregnancy. Breast tissue contains tiny milk sacs called lobules (where milk is made), ducts which carry milk from the lobules to the nipple and fatty tissue. Breasts also have fibrous tissue, arteries, veins, nerves and a lymph system which helps the body fight infection.



Breast tissue extends from the collarbone down to the bottom of the bra line and the armpit. Your chest muscles and ribs are underneath the breasts. Breast cancer occurs when cells in the breast tissue become abnormal and grow in an uncontrolled way. The majority of breast cancers develop in the milk ducts (intraductal cancers), while a small number start in the milk sacs or lobules (lobular cancers).

Be breast aware

It is important for women of all ages to be breast aware. Your breasts are continually changing. The major stages of growth, development and change occur during puberty, pregnancy, breast-feeding and menopause. Increasing age and weight changes can also affect the shape, size and feel of your breasts.

Become familiar with the usual look and feel of your breasts. Breasts are often quite lumpy and this can be normal for some women. Your breasts may feel more tender and lumpy just before your monthly period. This usually disappears after your period.

Young women's breasts are usually dense and fibrous because there is more glandular tissue than fatty tissue. As we age, breasts become less glandular and more fatty, making them softer and less lumpy.

Breast cancer screening

Breast screening can find cancers at an early stage, when they are too small for you to notice or when you don't have any symptoms.

All women aged 50 to 69 are invited to have a free screening mammogram (breast x-ray) at BreastScreen Queensland every two years, as this is when screening has been shown to be most effective.

Women aged 40 to 49, or 70 and over, may also be screened if they wish.

Book an appointment with BreastScreen Queensland by calling 13 20 50 or visit www.breastscreen.qld.gov.au

Changes to look for

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.

There is no 'right' way of checking your breasts however see a doctor immediately if you notice any unusual changes including:

- ▶ A lump, lumpiness or thickening in the breast or armpit.
- ▶ Changes to the nipple – discharge or drawing in of the nipple.
- ▶ Changes in the skin – dimpling, puckering or redness.
- ▶ Any change in shape, feel and size of the breast that is not usual.
- ▶ An area that feels different from the rest.
- ▶ Unusual pain.

You can also ask your doctor to examine your breasts as part of your health check-up. Nine out of ten breast changes are not breast cancer, however it is always important to have any changes checked out straight away by your doctor.

Breast cancer risk

One in eight Queensland women will be diagnosed with breast cancer before 85 years of age. As well as being a woman, getting older is the strongest risk factor for breast cancer: more than 75 per cent of cases occur in women over 50 years.

Breast cancer is not common in women younger than 40, however it is important for all women to be breast aware. Other factors which increase your risk include having one or more close relatives who have had breast cancer, particularly before the age of 50, or if you've had breast cancer in the past.

Reducing your risk

While some risk factors are out of your control, adopting a healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk:

LIMIT ALCOHOL. The more alcoholic drinks you have each day, the greater your risk of breast cancer. It is therefore a good idea to limit your alcohol intake to no more than one standard drink a day. Or better still avoid alcohol altogether.

BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE. An active lifestyle has been shown to reduce the risk of breast cancer. Try to do at least 30 minutes of vigorous activity or one hour of moderate exercise most days.

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT. Strive to keep your waistline to less than 80cm or a BMI less than 25 to lower your risk of breast cancer. Maintain a healthy weight by combining regular exercise with a healthy diet, which is low in fat and high in fresh fruit and vegetables.