

Further investigations

If a change is found, investigations include:

Ultrasound – sound waves are used to reflect a picture of the breast tissue. Ultrasound can be used to confirm whether a breast change is a fluid-filled cyst or a solid mass;

Fine needle aspiration – a sample of cells and fluid is taken from the area of the breast being investigated and sent to a laboratory for testing; and

Core biopsy – a small piece of breast tissue is taken and sent to a laboratory for testing.

Who is at risk?

While we do not know specifically what causes breast cancer, there are some things we know increase the likelihood of developing the disease:

- Being a woman is the main risk factor for developing breast cancer. Men do get breast cancer but it is about 100 times more common in women;

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among females.

- The risk for developing breast cancer increases with age. Most breast cancers occur in women over the age of 50;

- Women with a strong family history of breast cancer may have an increased chance of developing breast cancer. The risk depends on the number of relatives affected, the age of the relative(s) when they developed breast cancer and whether they were on one or both sides of the family. However, family history accounts for less than 5 per cent of all breast cancers diagnosed;
- Women who have had breast cancer are at increased risk for breast cancer developing again;
- Obesity increases a woman's risk of postmenopausal breast cancer;
- Alcohol consumption is a risk factor that may contribute to developing breast cancer. Aim to have one or two alcohol-free days a week and limit yourself on other days to no more than one standard drink a day; and
- There is increasing evidence to suggest that longer duration and greater intensity physical activity are associated with a reduced risk of breast cancer.

Most women with breast cancer have no obvious risk factors aside from getting older.



Queensland
Cancer Fund

Queensland Cancer Fund
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Fortitude Valley Qld 4006
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www.qldcancer.com.au



One in eleven Queensland women will develop breast cancer at some stage in their lives.



If breast cancer is found and treated early, there is an increased chance of surviving the disease.

For more information
contact the...

Cancer helpline
13 11 20

Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

The generosity of Queenslanders makes this program possible

The Queensland Cancer Fund is an independent, community-based charity and is not government funded

For information and support contact our Cancer Helpline on 13 11 20, Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm



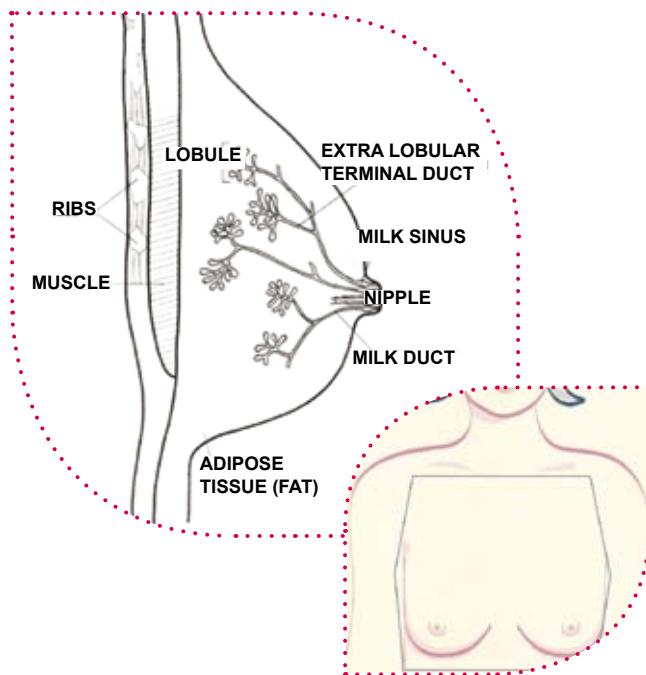
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be Breast aware



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).

Breast awareness

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 can often be 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.



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 but promptly see a doctor if you notice any unusual changes including:

- A lump, lumpiness or thickening;
- Changes to the nipple such as discharge or drawing in of the nipple;
- Changes in the skin such as dimpling, puckering or redness;
- Unusual pain; and
- Any change in shape, feel and size of the breast that is not usual.

It is important to have any change in your breasts checked promptly by your doctor.

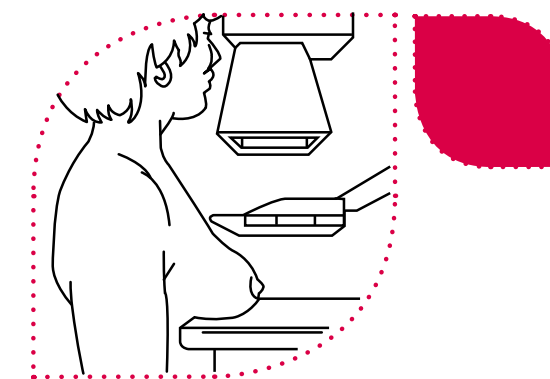
You can also ask your doctor to examine your breasts as part of your health check-up.

The vast majority of breast changes are not breast cancer. Some breast changes can be caused by harmless conditions such as cysts (fluid trapped in the breast tissue), fibroadenomas (lumps of fatty or fibrous tissue) or hormonal changes causing the breast to become swollen, painful or tender.

Mammograms

A screening mammogram is a breast x-ray that is used to look for signs of breast cancer. It can detect early breast changes that may be breast cancer, even where there are no symptoms.

Women aged 50–69 should have a screening mammogram every two years.



BreastScreen Queensland provides **free** screening mammograms to women aged 50 to 69 years, every two years. Each mammogram is carefully double checked by two specially trained doctors. You will receive a letter to remind you of your next appointment from BreastScreen Queensland. Call 13 20 50 to make an appointment at a service nearest you. A doctor's referral is not required.

Women aged 40 to 49 years and over 70 are also eligible for free mammograms. Mammograms for women under 40 are not recommended because the breast tissue is too dense.

Screening is also available at private clinics at a cost to women.

Your doctor can refer you for a diagnostic mammogram if you have any symptoms of breast cancer.