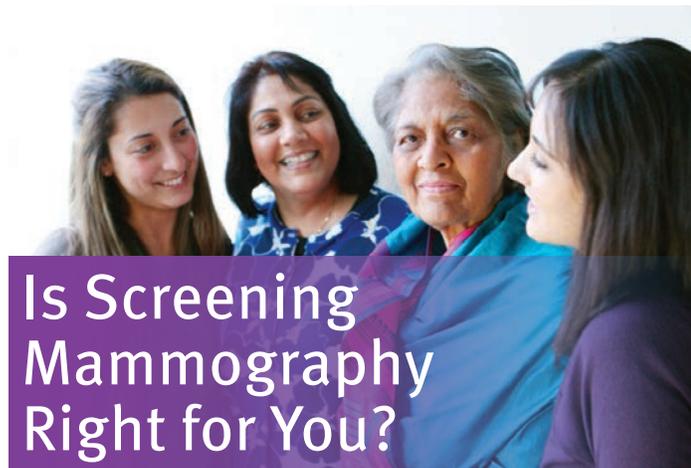




**BC Cancer Agency**

CARE + RESEARCH

An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority



## Is Screening Mammography Right for You?

**The Screening Mammography Program provides free screening mammograms for women in British Columbia.**

### What is a screening mammogram?

Mammograms are x-rays of the breasts that are done in complete privacy by a specially-trained female technologist.

A screening mammogram consists of four images (two of each breast) that look for hidden cancer in women who are healthy (no symptoms) and have never had breast cancer.

Women who are experiencing symptoms including a lump or nipple discharge should see their doctor immediately to determine if further testing is required.

### What happens during a mammogram?

- A female medical radiation technologist will place your breast on a special x-ray machine.
- A plastic plate will be used to hold your breast in place for a few seconds.
- You will feel some pressure on your breast during the x-ray. Compression is necessary to spread the breast tissue and eliminate motion, which may blur the picture. This may be uncomfortable and usually lasts no more than 10 seconds.
- Four pictures are taken, two of each breast.
- The technologist will check the quality of the pictures to make sure the radiologist can read them. Then, if needed, the technologist may take additional pictures.

## For your comfort and best results - be prepared

- Wear a two-piece outfit with a top that opens in the front. You will be asked to undress from the waist up.
- Do not use deodorant, powder, creams or lotions on the day of the appointment. These products may leave a residue that can make it hard to read your mammogram.
- Try to schedule an appointment when your breasts are least sensitive (within 10 days of your last period).
- Some women also find it helpful to avoid caffeine several days before an exam.

## Should I have a screening mammogram?

**If you are age 40 to 74 with a first degree relative (mother, daughter, sister) with breast cancer:**

**It is recommended that you get a mammogram every year.**

Women with a family history of breast cancer are almost two times more likely to develop breast cancer. A doctor's referral is not needed.

**If you are age 40 to 49 without a family history of breast cancer:**

**You are encouraged to talk to your doctor about the benefits and limitations of mammography.**

If screening mammography is chosen, it is available every two years. A doctor's referral is not needed but is recommended.

**If you are age 50 to 74 without a family history of breast cancer:**

**It is recommended that you get a mammogram every two years.**

For women in this age group, the benefits of screening mammograms clearly outweigh the limitations. Book your appointment today. A doctor's referral is not needed.

**If you are age 75+:**

**You are encouraged to talk to your doctor about the benefits and limitations of mammography.**

If screening mammography is chosen, it is available every two to three years. A doctor's referral is not needed but is recommended.

**If you are younger than age 40:**

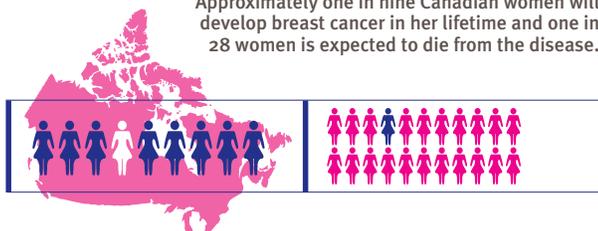
**Screening mammograms are not recommended unless you have a known BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation, prior chest wall radiation or strong family history of breast cancer. A doctor's referral is needed for every screen.**

## Why are mammograms important?

### Mammograms save lives

Finding cancer early means that it is less likely to have spread and treatment can be started earlier in the course of the disease.

Approximately one in nine Canadian women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime and one in 28 women is expected to die from the disease.



### Mammograms are effective

Screening mammograms are the best method for detecting breast cancer early. Mammograms can usually find lumps two or three years before a woman or her doctor can feel them.

**25%**  
REDUCTION  
IN DEATHS



Research has shown a 25 per cent reduction in deaths from breast cancer among women who are screened regularly.

### Your breast cancer risk increases with age

Nine out of 10 women diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history of the disease. While women with a family history of breast cancer have a higher than average risk, the most significant risk factor for breast cancer is being a woman over 50 years of age.

Over 80 per cent of new breast cancers diagnosed each year in BC are in women age 50 or older.



## Things to consider about mammograms:

### Mammograms are not perfect

Not all breasts look the same on a mammogram – a woman's age or breast density can make cancers more or less difficult to see. In general, screening mammograms are less effective in younger women because they tend to have denser breast tissue.

### Mammograms do not detect all cancers

Some cancers cannot be detected on a mammogram due to the location of the cancer or the density of the breast tissue. About 25 per cent of cancers in women ages 40-49 are not detectable by a screening mammogram, compared with about 10 per cent in women older than 50.

### Mammograms may lead to additional testing

On average, seven per cent of women screened through the Screening Mammography Program will require additional testing to look more closely at a specific area of the breast. This does not mean that a cancer was found – over 95 per cent of the women recalled for additional testing do not have cancer.

### Mammograms use low doses of radiation

The benefits of regular mammograms outweigh the risks posed by the small amount of radiation you are exposed to.

## Contact us:

Screening Mammography Program  
801-686 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5Z1G1  
1-800-663-9203  
screening@bccancer.bc.ca

Visit [www.screeningbc.ca/breast](http://www.screeningbc.ca/breast) for locations. Please have your BC Services Card/CareCard and doctor's name available when you call to book your appointment

MOBILE SERVICE AREAS  
CALL CENTRAL BOOKING:  
1-800-663-9203

#### VANCOUVER

· Interior/Kootenays	BC Women's Health Centre	604-775-0022
· Vancouver Island	Mount St. Joseph Hospital	604-877-8388
· Lower Mainland	5752 Victoria Drive	604-321-6770
· Northern BC	505 - 750 West Broadway	604-879-8700

#### VICTORIA

Fort Street	250-952-4232
Victoria General Hospital	250-727-4338

#### OTHER LOCATIONS

Abbotsford	604-851-4750	Nanaimo	250-716-5904
Burnaby	604-436-0691	North Vancouver	604-903-3860
Comox	250-890-3020	Penticton	250-770-7573
Coquitlam	604-927-2130	Prince George	1-800-663-9203
Delta	604-877-6187	Richmond	604-244-5505
Kamloops	250-828-4916	Surrey	604-582-4592
Kelowna	250-861-7560	Vernon	250-549-5451
Langley	604-514-6044	White Rock	604-535-4512

For all other locations please contact central booking: 1-800-663-9203. Central booking hours: Monday to Friday, 8:00am-5:30pm and Saturday, 8:00am-4:00pm.