

Breast Screening ?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, and 55,920 people are diagnosed with it every year (Cancer Research UK, 2018).

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a condition where cells in the breast grow and reproduce uncontrollably. The cancerous cells can invade and destroy surrounding healthy tissue, including organs. Cancer sometimes begins in one part of the body before spreading to other areas (metastasis).

Can a healthy lifestyle reduce the risk of developing breast cancer?

23% of breast cancers are preventable (Cancer Research UK, 2015), which means by making healthy choices you can reduce your risk of developing a breast cancer. This includes; maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding drinking alcohol, exercising regularly and having a low intake of saturated fat.

What is breast awareness?

Breast awareness is getting to know what looks and feels normal for you, so that you can confidently spot any changes. People of any age or gender can develop breast cancer, so it is important for everyone to practice breast awareness. There is no specific technique, but you should make sure to feel the entire breast, under the arms and all the way up to the collar bone. You should also look at your breasts and chest to see if you can see any changes. If you notice any unusual changes, you should tell your GP.

What is the NHS five-point code?

The NHS five-point code explains how you can look after your breast health:

1. Know what's normal for you
2. Look at your breasts and feel them
3. Know what changes to look for
4. Report any changes to a GP without delay
5. Attend routine screening if you're aged 50 to 70



Who can have breast screening?

Anyone registered with a GP as female and between the ages of 50 and 71 will be invited for NHS breast screening every three years, and their first invite will arrive before their 53 birthday. Women over 71 can self-refer every three years by calling the hub to make an appointment (see details on the next page).

What is breast screening?

NHS breast screening uses X-rays (mammograms) to look for cancers that are too small to see or feel. This helps to find breast cancers at an earlier stage, when they are easier to treat.

During breast screening you will have four mammograms; two for each breast. The mammograms are done by a specialist called a mammographer, and the mammographer will always be female. During each mammogram, the breast will be compressed between two plates which can be uncomfortable but only lasts a few seconds.

During the appointment, you will have to be undressed from the waist upwards. You can wear a shirt with trousers or a skirt to feel more covered. You should avoid using spray deodorant (roll on is okay) and talcum powder before your appointment as this can show up on the x-ray image.

What reasonable adjustments are available?

Reasonable adjustments available for people experiencing homelessness include: longer appointments, bringing a friend or support worker to the appointment, and pre-visits.

To book an appointment with reasonable adjustments, please contact the Hub:

☎ 020 3758 2024 ✉ RF-TR.LondonBreastScreeningHub@nhs.net

To arrange a pre-visit, please contact the health promotion team ☎ 020 7472 6154

How can I book a breast screening appointment?

When invited (or if over 71 and due a mammogram), women can book their appointment by contacting the Hub:

☎ 020 3758 2024 ✉ RF-TR.LondonBreastScreeningHub@nhs.net

Resources

NHS Breast cancer in women

🌐 www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer-in-women/

NHS Helping you decide leaflet - available in different languages

🌐 www.gov.uk/government/publications/breast-screening-helping-women-decide

Breast Cancer Now: Know your breasts

🌐 breastcancernow.org/information-support/publication/know-your-breasts-guide-breast-awareness-screening-bcc2

NHS Breast screening information for over 71s

🌐 assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/617002818fa8f529840622db/Breast_screening_aged_71_or_over.pdf

NHS Easy guide to breast screening

🌐 assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1166565/An_easy_guide_to_breast_screening_June23.pdf

Breast Cancer Now: Touch, look, check video

🌐 www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbaLvXEYal0