



Information for women with implants

What happens at BreastScreen NSW for women with implants?

This brochure is for women who have breast implants. It answers some of your questions about what happens when you come for a breast screen (screening mammogram) at BreastScreen NSW.

Can I have a breast screen if I have implants?

Yes. Most women with breast implants can have regular breast screens. If you have any concerns please talk to your doctor or the radiographer (the person who takes the breast screen) at BreastScreen NSW. If you are having any problems with your implants, please see your doctor, as our service can not help with implant problems.

Where will I have my breast screen?

You will need to go to a screening unit that is able to develop your breast screen film just after it has been taken. This is because the radiographer needs to check that as much of your breast tissue as possible has shown on the breast screen. This is not possible at some of our mobile van sites.

What should I do before my appointment?

It's better to wear a skirt or slacks and a top, rather than a dress, as you will need to undress from the waist up for the breast screen. Also, please don't use talcum powder on the day as it can show up on the breast screen. If you want your doctor to receive a copy of your results, please bring his or her name and address. If possible, please also bring any breast screens that you have had done privately before.

What will happen at BreastScreen NSW?

A member of staff will greet you, check your personal details and you may be asked to complete some forms.

When you are ready, the radiographer will explain what happens and position each of your breasts in turn between two flat plates on the screening machine. To get the clearest

possible picture, the machine briefly compresses the breasts between the plates. The breast screen will then be taken. Several breast screens of each breast will be taken.

How long will it take?

The compression of the breasts for the breast screen usually takes only a few seconds. The whole visit takes about 45 minutes to one hour. You have the right to withdraw from having your breast screen at any time.

Is it safe?

Each breast screen uses only a very low dose of radiation. As you have implants, extra views will be taken. This means that you will get slightly more radiation than if you didn't have implants.

Some women find the compression of the breasts uncomfortable but only a few find it painful. Occasionally the compression can result in temporary breast tenderness or bruising but this does not last for long. Compression of the breasts during a breast screen is vital so that the clearest possible picture of the breasts can be taken.

There is an extremely small chance that having a breast screen could make worse any existing split or leak in your implant, cause your implant to split or leak or break up any scar tissue that may have grown around your implant.

Can every breast cancer be found?

Although a breast screen is the best way of finding breast cancer at the present time, like many other medical tests it is not 100% accurate. Breast implants can cover some of the breast tissue. This may make it a little more difficult to find small breast cancers.

When will I get my results?

Your results should be sent to you in about 2 weeks. If you agree, your results will also be sent to your doctor.

Some women are asked to return for a repeat breast screen simply because of technical problems. Some women need to have additional tests at one of our assessment clinics because their breast screen shows a change in their breast. Most women who are asked to return do not have breast cancer.

How often should I have a breast screen?

From the age of 50, you should have a breast screen every 2 years. This is important because changes in the breasts, such as cancer, develop over time. Also your risk of developing breast cancer increases with increasing age. We will automatically send you a letter to remind you when your next visit is due. If for some reason you don't receive a letter, just give us a call at the appropriate time and we will make an appointment. If you do

not wish to receive reminder letters, please tell us.

What else can I do?

- Have a screening mammogram at BreastScreen NSW every two years if you are aged 50 to 69 years.
- Have a clinical breast examination by your doctor or women's health nurse once a year.
- See your doctor immediately if you notice any unusual changes in your breasts, such as lumps, pain or nipple discharge, even if your breast screen has been normal.

**Remember to visit BreastScreen NSW every 2 years –
early detection is your best protection!**