



Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in the UK. Most women diagnosed with breast cancer are over the age of 50, but younger women can also get breast cancer. Around 1 in 8 women are diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, however there is a good chance of recovery if it's detected at an early stage.

That's why it's vital that women check their breasts regularly for any changes and always have any changes examined by a GP

Did you know...

1 in 8 women
will be
diagnosed
with breast
cancer

Breast
cancer can
affect men
too

There are
11,500 deaths
due to breast
cancer every
year in the UK

Women
between 50 and
70 are invited
for breast
screening every
3 years

Signs and symptoms

Breast cancer can have several symptoms, but the first noticeable symptom is usually a lump or area of thickened breast tissue.

Most breast lumps are not cancerous, but it's always best to have them checked by a doctor.

You should also see a GP if you notice any of these symptoms:

- A change in the size or shape of one or both breasts
- Discharge from either of your nipples, which may be streaked with blood
- A lump or swelling in either of your armpits
- Dimpling on the skin of your breasts
- A rash on or around your nipple
- A change in the appearance of your nipple, such as becoming sunken into your breast

Screening

- Anyone registered with a GP as female will be invited for NHS breast screening every 3 years between the ages of 50 and 71
- You'll get a letter in the post inviting you
- You'll automatically get your first invite for breast screening between the ages of 50 and 53. Then you'll be invited every 3 years until you turn 71
- You need to be registered with a GP surgery to be invited for breast screening
- Mammographic screening, where X-ray images of the breast are taken, is the most commonly available way of finding a change in your breast tissue (lesion) at an early stage
- Women with a higher-than-average risk of developing breast cancer may be offered screening and genetic testing for the condition
- All women who are 50 to 70 years old are invited for breast cancer screening every 3 years
- Women over the age of 70 are also entitled to screening and can arrange an appointment through their local screening unit
- If you're a trans man, trans woman or are non-binary you may be invited automatically, or you may need to talk to your GP surgery or call the local breast screening service to ask for an appointment

If you have not been sent a letter

If you have not been invited for breast screening by the time you are 53 and think you should have been, contact your local breast screening service:

Gateshead – 0191 445 2554 (this is also the number for people in South Tyneside and Sunderland)

Newcastle – 0191 282 0202

If you are 71 or over

You will not automatically be invited for breast screening if you are 71 or over.

But you can still have breast screening every 3 years if you want to. You will need to call your local breast screening service to ask for an appointment:

Gateshead – 0191 445 2554

Newcastle – 0191 282 0202

Risks and how to reduce them

Studies have looked at the link between breast cancer and diet. Although there are no definite conclusions, there are benefits for women who:

- maintain a healthy weight
- exercise regularly
- have a low intake of saturated fat
- do not drink alcohol
- It's been suggested that regular exercise can reduce your risk of breast cancer by almost as much as a third. Regular exercise and a healthy lifestyle can also improve the outlook for people affected by breast cancer
- If you've been through the menopause, it's particularly important that you try to get to, and maintain, a healthy weight. This is because being overweight or obese causes more oestrogen to be produced, which can increase the risk of breast cancer

You can take action to reduce your risk by:

- Checking your breasts regularly
- Seeing a GP as soon as you notice anything unusual for you
- Attending your screening appointments when invited
- Getting more active
- Reducing your alcohol intake
- Losing weight if you are overweight
- Eating a balanced diet

Further information and resources

- [Healthworks 'Take a minute' breast cancer video](#)
- [NHS - what happens at a breast screening appointment video](#)
- [NHS website](#)
- [Cancer Research](#) - breast cancer
- [CoppaFeel](#) - how to check your breasts
- [Pink Ribbon Foundation](#)
- [MacMillan Cancer Support](#)
- [Breast screening information for women with learning disabilities](#)

