

Be aware of breast cancer signs and get checked early

All women are urged to be 'breast aware' and to recognise that lumps aren't the only sign of breast cancer to look out for. It's vital to get checked early and go for screening when invited.

Signs and symptoms

It is important for women to look out for changes in the appearance of their breasts, such as:

- a change in size or outline of either breast, especially those caused by arm movement
- any puckering, dimpling or redness of the skin
- veins that stand out more than usual

Women should be aware of any feelings of pain or discomfort in one part of either the breast or armpit, particularly if it is new and persistent.

Women should also look and feel for any lumps or thickening in either breast that feels different from the other breast, as well as any swelling or lumps under the armpit or around the collarbone.

Also look out for any changes to the nipple, such as a nipple that:

- has become pulled in
- has changed shape
- has a discharge
- bleeds
- has a rash or has crusted, flaky skin

If the change is due to cancer, earlier detection may mean simpler and more successful treatment.

Any changes which are not normal for you should be investigated straight away by your GP. Don't be embarrassed or ignore any potential signs.

You can find out more on the [breast cancer in women page](#).

While breast cancer is much more common in women, [it can also affect men](#). In rare cases it develops in the small amount of breast tissue men have behind their nipples.

Breast screening

Prevention and early detection are key to saving lives from breast cancer.

All women who are invited for breast screening are encouraged to think about going.

Most women will have normal mammograms. Out of every 100 women who attend for screening, around four are asked to come back for further tests. Most of them will have a normal result.

There is information about screening on the page below.

Screening remains the best way of detecting breast cancer at an early stage when treatment can be more effective.

More useful links