NHS
North East London
Cancer Alliance

Looking after your breasts



Know what's normal • Get changes checked • Go for screening

What should I do at my age?

under 50 — Know your normal



Be aware of how your breasts usually look and feel. Check your breasts at home regularly. If you notice a change that is unusual for you, or any symptoms outlined in this leaflet, contact your GP.

50 to 70 — Go for screening



Attend your NHS breast screening when you are invited, even if you have no symptoms. Your first invitation will usually arrive between 50 and 53 and then once every three years. Make sure your GP has your latest contact details.

71 and over — Keep screening



You will no longer be invited automatically, but you can still have NHS breast screening every three years. All women over the age of 70 will need to phone the hub on **020 3758 2024** to arrange their appointment.

Screening is for people with no symptoms

If you have symptoms, do not wait for your next screening - contact your GP. This applies at any age and even if your last screening result was normal.

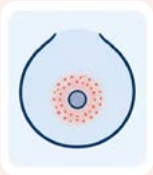
Know what's normal for you

There is no special way to check your breasts and you do not need to follow a particular routine. The important thing is to know what is normal for you. We recommend you check your breasts every month.

Look and feel for changes such as:



a new lump or swelling in your breast, chest or armpit



a rash, crusting or changes to the skin around your nipple



an area that feels different, thicker or firmer than usual



a nipple that has changed position or become pulled in



a change in the size or shape of a breast



unusual fluid or discharge from a nipple



changes to the skin, such as dimpling, puckering or redness (or a blue/ purple colour on darker skin tones)



pain in your breast or armpit that does not go away



Contact your GP if you have symtoms

Most breast changes are not cancer.
But if something does not look or feel normal for you, it is important to get it checked by your GP.

Breast screening

An appointment worth keeping



Screening can find breast cancer before you know it is there.

Why go for breast screening?

Breast screening uses X-rays called mammograms to look for cancers that may be too small to see or feel. Finding breast cancer earlier can make it easier to treat and increase the chance of successful treatment.

Your breast screening test:

Simpler than you might think

- Make sure you are registered with a GP in England.
- Give your GP your up-to-date contact details.
- You will automatically receive an invite when you are aged between 50 and 53 and then once every three years.
- This will be sent via text and email and will include a link.
- You need to click on the link and put in your date of birth in DDMMYY format to access your digital invite.
- If the link is unopened for 48 hours, a letter will be sent in the post to you registered address.
- Look out for your invite. Follow the instructions and attend your appointment.



Feel well? That's still the time to go.

Screening is for people who do not have signs or symptoms. Even if your breasts look and feel completely normal, take up the offer when you are invited.

What happens at your appointment?

- Your mammogram will always be carried out by a **female** mammographer.
- Each breast is placed between two X-ray plates for a few seconds.
- Women are usually fine with the mammogram. Some may find it uncomfortable or painful, but it is over quickly.
- Tell the mammographer if you are uncomfortable or need them to stop.
- If you need reasonable adjustments or extra support, contact the screening service before your appointment.
- You can bring a friend, relative, or carer with you to your breast screening appointment for company and emotional support.



Can't make your appointment?

Please rearrange it rather than miss it. Use the contact details in your invitation. Also make sure your GP has your current address and contact details.

Worried about a breast change?

Don't wait for screening – contact your GP.

Breast screening is for people who do not have symptoms.

If you find a lump or notice another change that is not normal for you, contact your GP surgery rather than waiting for your next screening invitation.

Most breast changes are not cancer, but it is always worth getting a new or unusual change checked.



Looking after your health

There is no guaranteed way to prevent breast cancer, but being physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking and limiting alcohol can help reduce your risk of several cancers. If breast or ovarian cancer runs in your family, tell your GP.

Find out more

Visit the North East London Cancer Alliance website for trusted information about breast cancer and breast screening:

nelcanceralliance.nhs.uk/breast-screening