

# Taking care of your breasts



This book is also available in large print,  
Braille or on audio tape. ☎ 0845 092 0808  
for more information.

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## About this book

This book tells you how to look after your breasts. It is important to know what your breasts are usually like. Then you can notice if anything changes or feels different.

Breast cancer is a disease that happens in some people's breasts. But most changes that happen in our breasts are not cancer. Try to see your doctor as soon as you notice a change – it will help you feel less worried.

So take care of your breasts. Go for it!



# 1. You and your breasts



Everyone's breasts are different.



You may have one breast bigger or a different shape.



If you have periods your breasts may feel sore just before or during your period.



Get to know what your breasts usually look and feel like.



## 2. Getting to know your breasts



You can get to know your breasts when you wash.



It can be easier to feel your breasts when your hand has soap on it.



Feel in your armpits and on your chest area up to your neck, as well as your breasts.



Look at your breasts in a mirror. Lift each one up so you can see and feel underneath too.

### 3. When to check your breasts



Check your breasts every four to six weeks.



You can check your breasts when you put on your bra.





You can check your breasts when you get dressed.



You can check your breasts when you have a bath or shower.

## 4. What to do if you notice a change



Talk to someone you trust if you notice anything different about your breasts.



Your carer or support worker can get you some information.



The information can answer some of your questions.



You or your carer or support worker can make an appointment with your doctor.

## 5. Seeing your doctor



See your doctor as soon as you can if you notice a change in your breasts. You can ask to see a woman doctor and take someone you trust with you if you want.



The doctor will feel your breasts to check them. You will need to take off your top and bra.





The doctor will try to explain the change in your breast.



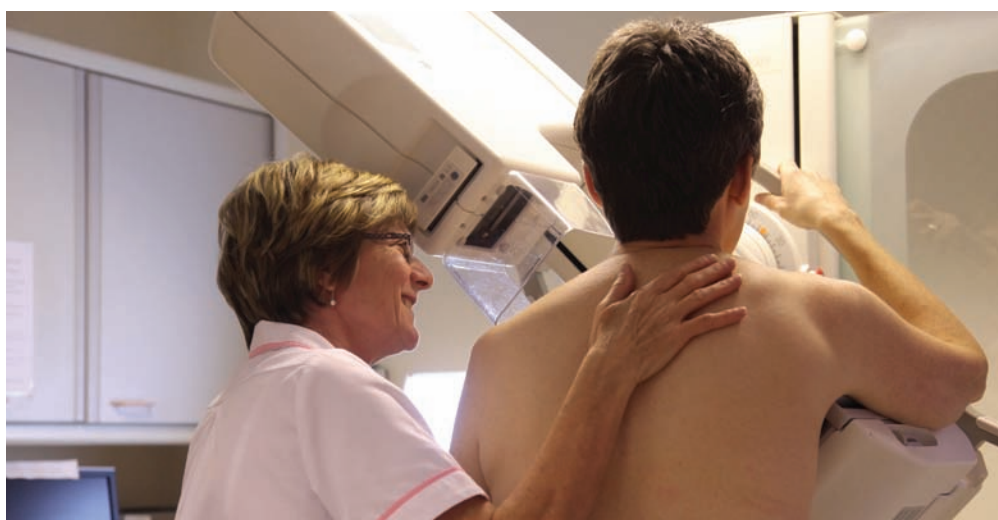
You may need to go to a breast clinic at the hospital for another check.



## 6. At the breast clinic



A doctor or nurse will examine your breasts to check the change. You will need to take off your top and bra again.



You may need tests to help find out what the change in your breast is. You might have a breast x-ray (called a mammogram) or an ultrasound scan.



The doctor may want to check some breast cells under a microscope. They will use a needle to take the cells. You might have an injection first to make the area numb.



You may need to go back to the clinic on another day to get your test results.

## 7. Who can get breast cancer?



Breast cancer is a disease that happens in some people's breasts.



Both women and men can get breast cancer.



Most people who get breast cancer are women aged over 50. But it can happen at any age.



Some people may get breast cancer if a lot of close relatives in the family have had breast cancer.



## 8. Having a breast x-ray

All women between 50 and 70 are invited for a breast x-ray (mammogram) every three years. This is called breast screening.





Breast screening can help find breast cancer early, which is good. But sometimes it can mean having more tests or an operation that turn out not to be needed after all. Some people think this is not so good.



You can choose if you want to go for breast screening. Talk to someone you trust to help you decide.

You can visit the screening centre and see the x-ray machine before your appointment. The staff will answer your questions.



You will need to take off your top and bra for the x-ray. A woman called a radiographer will take the x-ray. It can be uncomfortable but it doesn't last long.

Afterwards the radiographer will tell you when you will get a letter with your results.



## 9. Keeping healthy



You may make your chance of getting breast cancer smaller by being healthy.



Don't eat too many fatty foods like crisps and cakes.



Do some exercise like walking or swimming.



Try not to drink too much alcohol.  
**And finally – get to know your breasts!**





Breast Cancer Care is a charity that gives free information and help to anyone who has breast cancer or is worried about their breasts.

We push for better treatment and support for people with breast cancer and their families.

UK Helpline ☎ 0808 800 6000  
Text Relay ☎ 18001 0808 800 6000

You can look at our website too -  
[www.breastcancercare.org.uk](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk)

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