

What is BreastCheck?

- BreastCheck is a program, funded by Manitoba Health, that checks women ages 50 and over for early signs of breast cancer.
 - It includes a breast x-ray (mammogram) and information on breast health.
 - Manitoba Health provides BreastCheck with the names and addresses of women when they turn 50 years of age so they can be invited to be screened for breast cancer. This information is provided and kept confidential according to the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA).
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Why be screened?

- Regular screening mammograms can find breast cancer early before there are symptoms. If found and treated early it is less likely you will die from breast cancer.
- Every year more than 900 women in Manitoba are told they have breast cancer.
- Every year about 200 women in Manitoba die from this disease.
- As women grow older the chance of getting breast cancer increases. 80% of breast cancers are found in women ages 50 and over.
- In Manitoba, breast cancer deaths were reduced by 23% in women who attended BreastCheck.

What makes me eligible?

- You are a woman age 50 or over.
- You do not have breast cancer.
- You do not have breast implants.
- You have no breast symptoms such as unusual lumps or bloody nipple discharge.

What is a mammogram?

- A mammogram is an x-ray of your breasts. It can show most breast cancer 2 to 3 years before it can be felt.
 - It uses very low doses of radiation.
 - It is the best way to detect early breast cancer.
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How is it done?

- A technologist takes two x-rays of each breast after carefully pressing the breast between two plastic plates.
- The compression is a necessary part of the test in order to get the best image possible.
- This is not harmful to the breast and each x-ray takes only a few seconds.

How does it feel?

- Most women find that having a mammogram does not hurt. Some find it uncomfortable and a few find it painful.
- If you have tender breasts try taking a mild pain reliever about an hour before your appointment.
- A few women may have redness or bruising which usually disappears in a few days. Tearing can sometimes occur if the skin under the breast along the bra line has become very thin. Keeping this area dry may help prevent this problem.

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How do I get ready for an appointment?

- You will be asked to remove your clothing from the waist up. We suggest a two piece outfit so you only have to remove your top.
- **Do not wear deodorant, talcum powder, or lotion under your arms or near your breasts as these can show up on the x-ray.**
- We are a scent free environment so please do not wear perfume.

How often should I be screened?

- It is recommended that most women 50 to 74 years of age have a screening mammogram every 2 years.
- Some women are invited annually based on family history or the recommendation of the radiologist.
- If you are under 50 or over 74 please speak with your health care provider about the best breast health program for you. For more information see the Decision Aid available at www.BreastCheckmb.ca/resources.

What else do I need to know?

- Mammograms cannot find all breast cancer. About 20 out of every 100 breast cancers cannot be seen on a mammogram. That is why it is important to know how your breasts normally look and feel. If you find a lump or other changes in your breast before your next screening appointment, see your health care provider right away.
- There is a chance of worry from false alarms. Out of every 100 women screened, 5 will be sent for extra tests. Only 1 of them will have breast cancer.
- Screening can result in over diagnosis and over treatment of cancers which may not otherwise have become apparent during a woman's lifetime.
- A Decision Aid containing more information on risks and benefits of screening mammograms is available at www.BreastCheckmb.ca/resources.

How do I make an appointment?

- Call BreastCheck to make an appointment at one of the sites listed on the next page.
- A doctor's referral is not needed.

Who can I call if I have questions?

- Call the BreastCheck program at 204-788-8000 or 1-800-903-9290.

WINNIPEG:

5 - 25 Sherbrook Street

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2B1

PHONE: (204) 788-8000 OR 1-800-903-9290

