



# Breast screening & BreastScreen Queensland



BreastScreen Queensland Gold Coast Service  
December 2024



**Queensland**  
Government

# Acknowledgement

*We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands in which we work, live and grow - the peoples of the Yugambeh Language speaking nation.*

*We also pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.*



*A Woman's Dreaming*  
Artwork by Sharon McAvoy

# Breast cancer

- Most common cancer in Australian women (aside from non-melanoma skin cancer)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of cancer-related death in women
- 1 in 7 Australian women (& 1 in 638 men) will be diagnosed in their lifetime\*
- More than 20,000 females & 200+ males diagnosed each year\*
- 92% individuals survive 5 years+. 98% survival if tumours <10mm or localised to breast area
- Most women diagnosed survive due to finding breast cancer early + improved treatment options due to new medicine & technology advances

*(\*2023 AIHW estimate)*

# Risk factors

- We do not know what causes breast cancer & we cannot prevent it
- Several risk factors *can* increase a person's chance of developing breast cancer including:
  - Personal
  - Family history/Genetic
  - Medical history
  - Reproductive
  - Lifestyle
  - Medications
  - Environmental

For more information visit [breastscreen.qld.gov.au/should-i-screen/am-i-at-risk-of-breast-cancer](https://breastscreen.qld.gov.au/should-i-screen/am-i-at-risk-of-breast-cancer) or [breastcancerriskfactors.gov.au](https://breastcancerriskfactors.gov.au)

- Family history is important, but 95 out of 100 women diagnosed have no family history
- **Biggest risk factors are being female & getting older**
  - 80% of breast cancers occur in women 50+. Average age at diagnosis is 60

For every 100 people diagnosed with breast cancer



# Why early detection is important

- Finding breast cancer early gives individuals the best chance of successful treatment & recovery
- Having a regular screening mammogram (breast screen) can find breast cancer in its very early stages, when it's easier to treat
- A breast screen won't stop individuals getting breast cancer, but finding it early means:
  - ✓ More treatment options
  - ✓ More conservative surgery
  - ✓ Less chance of cancer having spread
  - ✓ Improved quality of life
  - ✓ Greater chance of survival



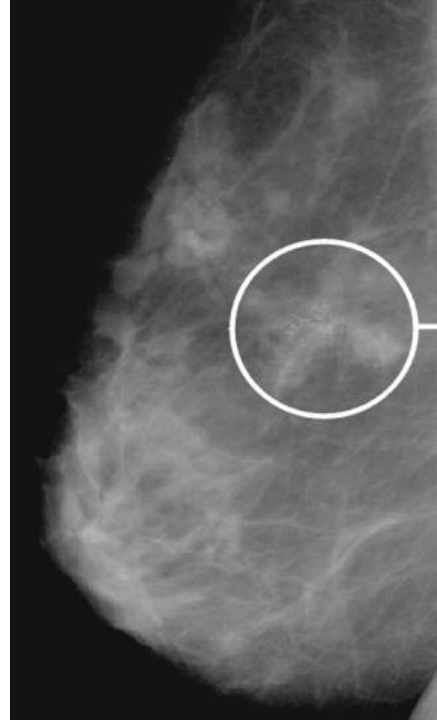
"Do yourself a favour and have regular breast screens - early detection saved my life"

**Marija** - Enjoys nature, loves spending time with family, and is a breast cancer survivor



# Screening Mammograms

- Aims to detect unsuspected (mostly impalpable) lesions
- For asymptomatic 'well' women with no breast cancer signs/symptoms
- No doctor referral required, but GP recommendation is encouraged
- Can detect very small changes in the breast & most breast cancer present
- Best way to find early breast cancer, before it can be seen or felt, for women 50+
- Free at BreastScreen services
- Organised program with systematic data collection
- Emphasis is on population benefit
- Women 50-74 actively invited - evidence of screening benefit strongest for this group
- Most clients recommended to screen every 2 years. Some invited for annual screening
- Women in 40s & 75+ may benefit & are eligible to access free screening
- 'Normal' results go to clients & nominated GP within 2-4 weeks via post or electronically
- With 'abnormal' results, clients notified by phone. GP notified of outcomes post Assessment



## Pre-menopausal breast

## Post-menopausal breast

## What about women under 40?

- Breast cancer is less common
- Mammograms are less effective
- Young women, & women with dense breasts, should talk with their GP
- BSQ sees some women under 40 at North Brisbane Family clinic via Dr referral



# Diagnostic Mammograms

- For people with existing breast cancer signs or symptoms
- Investigation & diagnosis of breast changes or abnormalities seen or felt
- Done in general diagnostic imaging practice or specialised breast clinic experienced in diagnostic procedures - mainly people with palpable lesions/changes
- May incur out-of-pocket expenses
- Need a doctor referral
- Report sent to GP/surgeon in a few days
- Recall & further tests recommended at discretion of GP/surgeon
- GP/surgeon records data specific to individual management
- Emphasis is on individual benefit

**NOTE:** Do not refer patients with existing breast cancer signs/symptoms to BreastScreen



# About the BSQ Program

- High quality, nationally accredited breast screening program
- All BreastScreen services are required to meet strict standards
- Women 50-74 years invited to join & recommended to screen every 2 years
- Individuals 40+ who were assigned female at birth, or identify or present as female, are eligible
- Over 230 locations – see [\*\*Find a location | BreastScreen Queensland\*\*](#)
  - Permanent: Burleigh Waters, Helensvale, Robina, Southport
  - Mobile: Beaudesert, Eagleby, Elanora, Jimboomba, Nerang, North Tamborine, Pimpama



# BSQ program benefits

- **Free** breast screens & follow-up tests
- **Reminder notices** sent when due
- **State-wide database** (not National)
- **High quality**
  - ✓ Mammography experts specialised in screening & assessment of impalpable lesions
  - ✓ X-rays independently viewed by at least 2 specially trained doctors
  - ✓ Friendly, highly trained professionals
- **Accessible**
  - ✓ Convenient locations across Qld
  - ✓ Can book online (**[breastscreen.qld.gov.au](http://breastscreen.qld.gov.au)**) or call **132050** (or via TIS - 131450 for
  - ✓ Group bookings can be arranged
  - ✓ Interpreter support available
  - ✓ No GP referral needed



# Help boost breast screening participation

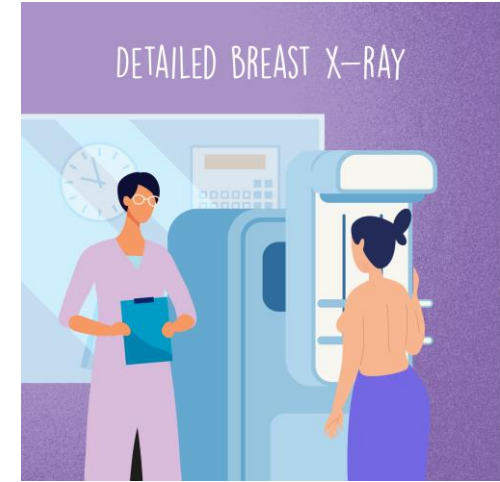
**NOTE: Only half of local woman aged 50-74 regularly participate in the BSQ program**

- Ways you can help increase screening rates:
  - ✓ Encourage eligible clients to access free BSQ services
  - ✓ Understand what happens at screening & assessment visits to better support patients
  - ✓ Share information resources with patients (inc. online fact sheets & videos)
  - ✓ Display promotional resources (inc. posters, brochures, cards)
  - ✓ Support use of GP Recommendation pads & electronic GP Referral forms
  - ✓ Audit practice database to see if BSQ outcomes & reminders are up-to-date in patient files
  - ✓ Prompt overdue patients to screen during consultations or via SMS reminders

**NOTE: BSQ client 'Well woman' results are also available via *MyHealthRecord***

# Help patients prepare for their visit

- Become familiar with breast screening process:
  - ✓ Once booked, clients complete a *Consent Form & Personal Questionnaire*
  - ✓ Female radiographer takes client to private room & explains next steps
  - ✓ Individuals remove top & bra (Tip: wearing a two-piece outfit is best)
  - ✓ Two X-ray images taken of each breast usually
  - ✓ Procedure only takes a few seconds & may feel uncomfortable
  - ✓ Clients can ask to stop at any time & talk to staff if any concerns
  - ✓ Entire visit takes around 15-30 minutes
- An online video shows what happens at a BSQ appointment - [breastscreen.qld.gov.au/having-a-breast-screen#video](https://breastscreen.qld.gov.au/having-a-breast-screen#video)

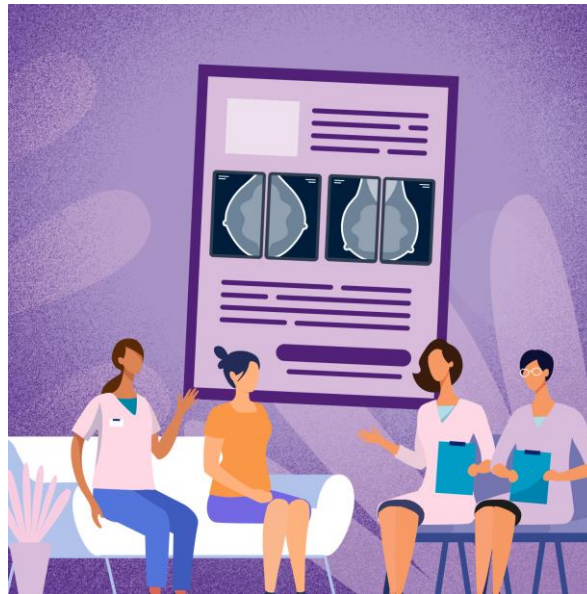


*(Videos available in several languages including Auslan)*



# What happens next

- Each breast screen image is read by 2 or more trained doctors
- If no signs of breast cancer are seen, results sent to clients in 2-4 weeks, with copy to doctor
- Most clients advised there are no signs of breast cancer & invited to return in 2 years. Some are invited to rescreen annually
- Women aged 74+ are not sent a reminder notice but can continue to screen if they wish. Older women can talk with their GP to help decide if screening is right for them



# If more tests are needed ...

- Around 1 out of 20 clients screened will be asked to return for further tests
- If more tests are needed, a Nurse will phone individuals & invite them to Southport clinic
- Follow-up tests at Assessment clinics are free & involve a specialist multidisciplinary team
- Tests may include tomosynthesis (3D mammography), ultrasound, needle and/or core biopsies
- An online video shows what happens at follow-up BSQ Assessment clinics - [breastscreen.qld.gov.au/having-a-breast-screen/having-follow-up-tests#video](https://breastscreen.qld.gov.au/having-a-breast-screen/having-follow-up-tests#video)

## What happens at a BreastScreen Queensland Assessment Clinic

This video explains what happens when clients are asked to come back for more tests after their breast screen.

It covers things like:

- how to prepare for your appointment
- the kinds of tests you may have
- what happens after your appointment.

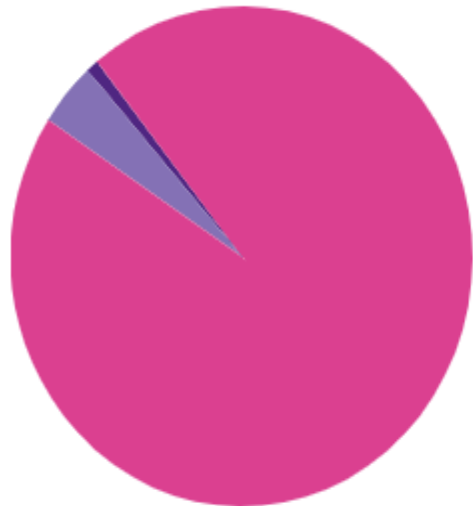


*(Videos available in several languages including Auslan)*

# More about BSQ Assessment visits

- Most individuals asked to return for more tests will be told they do not have breast cancer
- In FY24, BSQ GC Service screened 34,508 clients - 5% (1749) were recalled for more tests. On average, 4 breast cancers were diagnosed each week
- If diagnosed, clients may return to BSQ after 5 years post diagnosis (& treatment), if suitable

For every 1000 people who have a breast screen



950 will have a normal result

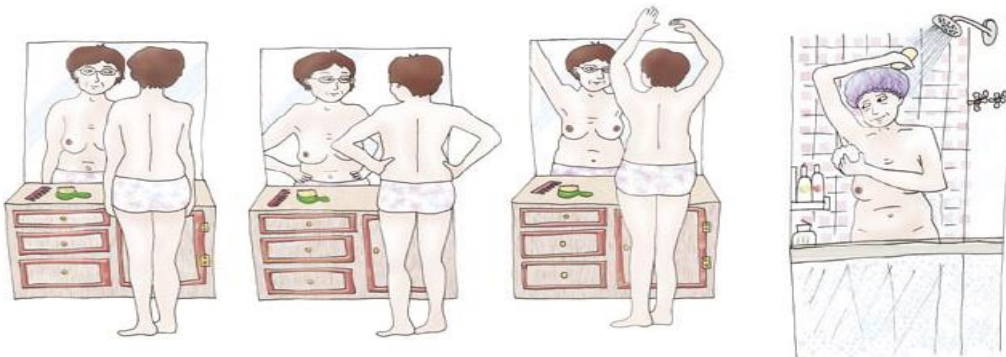
50 will be asked to have follow-up tests

6 of those asked to have follow up tests will be diagnosed with breast cancer

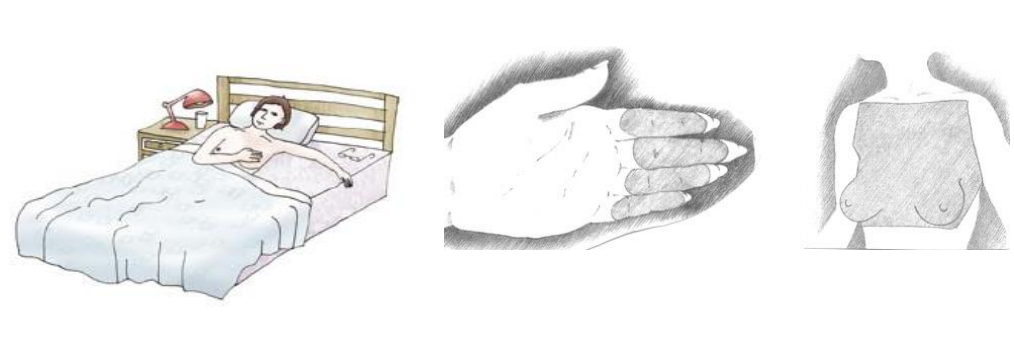
# Promote breast awareness

- Encourage all patients to 'Be Breast Aware' & get to know what their breasts/chest normally look and feel like & see a doctor, without delay, if any new or unusual changes including:
  - ✓ A new lump, lumpiness, or thickening (especially if only in one breast)
  - ✓ Nipple changes (crusting, ulceration, redness, dimpling, drawing inwards, discharge)
  - ✓ Skin changes (puckering, dimpling, redness, rash)
  - ✓ Persistent or unusual pain that does not go away (particularly if one breast)

## LOOK



## FEEL





# Support patients to reduce breast cancer risk

Encourage patients to:

- ✓ Maintain a healthy body weight
- ✓ Be physically active
- ✓ Balance intake & activity
- ✓ Make healthy food choices, with a variety of vegetables & fruit daily
- ✓ Avoid or limit alcohol (<1 standard drink per day)
- ✓ Encourage breast feeding
- ✓ Learn more on reducing their cancer risk by visiting [canceraustralia.gov.au](https://canceraustralia.gov.au)