



Priorities in Breast Awareness

February 2011

1. **Mammogram**
2. **Be Breast Aware**
3. **Your Family Doctor**

MAMMOGRAM

A screening mammogram is the best method for the early detection of breast cancer in women with no symptoms¹.

The Foundation recommends a screening mammogram for women as follows:

- 40-49 years every year²
- 50 years onwards every two years until 74 years of age³

The Foundation strongly supports the National Screening Programme, BreastScreen Aotearoa, which provides **free** screening mammograms to women aged 45-69 every two years. To enrol on this programme phone: 0800 270 200^{4,5}.

BE BREAST AWARE

From 20 years of age, the Foundation recommends women become aware of how their breasts look and feel:

- Know what is normal for you
- Know what changes to look and feel for⁶

YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR

Breast changes to see your family doctor about:

- A new lump or thickening, especially if it is only in one breast
- A change in breast shape or size
- A pain in the breast that is unusual
- A change in the skin of the breast such as:
 - Puckering or dimpling
 - Reddening or a rash
- Any change in a nipple, such as:
 - A turned-in nipple
 - A discharge that occurs without squeezing

Remember you are looking and feeling for any new or unusual changes⁶.

For the slightest concern about your breasts, discuss with your family doctor:

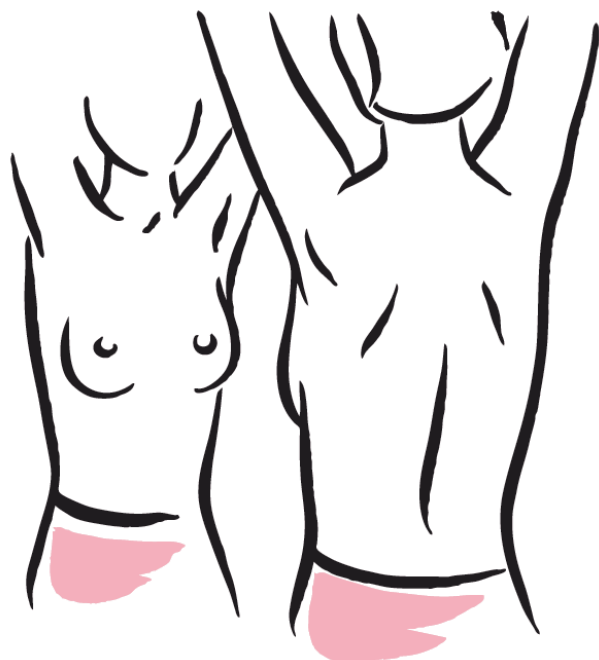
- Your need for a clinical breast examination
- Your personal risk, particularly if you have a strong family history of breast or ovarian cancer
- Your need for a screening or diagnostic mammogram⁶

Nine out of 10 breast lumps are not cancerous

*** Go to The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation's website for further information
www.nzbcf.org.nz, phone toll free 0800 902 732 or email breasthealth@nzbcf.org.nz

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IF YOU WISH TO CHECK YOUR BREASTS, GOOD PLACES TO DO THIS ARE:

- In front of a mirror
- In the shower or bath

IN FRONT OF A MIRROR - check for changes:

- a. Place your hands at your sides and look for any changes.
- b. Place your hands on your hips and then press your shoulders and elbows forward. Look for changes.
- c. Raise your arms and clasp your hands above your head. Look again for changes.

IN THE SHOWER OR BATH

With the fingertips of your three middle fingers, use soap to glide over each breast. The way you do this does not matter. The main thing is to cover all your breast tissue from just under your collarbone to under your breast and from your mid-chest to your ribs at the side of your chest. Also, with each arm by your

side, press your fingers firmly up into each armpit. Breast checks may make some women feel very anxious, while others will feel reassured; so they are a personal choice^{6,7}.

References

1. Wall, M. (2007, March). Management of women with breast cancer symptoms. *Screening Matters: Newsletter of the National Screening Unit. Issue 9, 4.* www.nsu.govt.nz
2. The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation (2008, April). Position Statement on Yearly Breast Screening Mammograms for Women 40-49 years of age. NZBCF: Auckland.
3. National Health Service (UK). www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/breastscreen/index.html#develop
4. Ministry of Health/National Screening Unit/BreastScreening Aotearoa (Revised June 2007). *More about breast screening and BreastScreen Aotearoa.* (booklet). p. 44. Ministry of Health, Wellington. www.nsu.govt.nz
5. Ministry of Health/National Screening Unit/BreastScreening Aotearoa (Revised June 2008). *Having a mammogram every two years improves a woman's chances of surviving breast cancer* (pamphlet). Ministry of Health, Wellington. www.nsu.govt.nz
6. The National Screening Unit, the Cancer Society of New Zealand and The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation (2008, Oct). Position Statement on Breast Awareness. Ministry of Health: Wellington. www.nzbcf.org.nz
7. The New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation www.nzbcf.org.nz