

# Awareness

## Breast Awareness

- For women of all ages, it is recommended that you be *breast aware*. Breast awareness is being familiar with the normal look and feel of your breasts, so that you can identify any unusual changes (such as a new lump, thickening in the breast, especially if it is only in one breast, changes to the shape or size of the breast or changes to the shape of the nipple). Take the time to 'get to know' how your breasts normally look and feel through normal regular activities (such as showering, getting dressed, using body lotion or looking in the mirror). Early detection gives the best possible chance of survival if you are diagnosed with breast cancer<sup>1</sup>. If you notice any changes in your breasts, see your doctor without delay, so that the changes can be checked by a health professional.
- You don't need to use a special technique, but ensure you look at and feel your breasts regularly. Make sure this includes all parts of your breast, your armpit and up to your collarbone<sup>2</sup>.
- If you have a strong family history or you are concerned that you may have an increased risk of breast cancer, talk to your GP or local family cancer clinic. Your doctor can help you assess and manage your breast cancer risk<sup>3</sup> and will advise of any additional precautions or screening you may require.
- It is important to remember that breast awareness does not replace having regular mammograms and other screening tests as recommended by your doctor. In order to detect breast cancer early, it is recommended that all women between 50-74 years attend regular screening mammograms every two years<sup>4</sup>. These are offered for free by BreastScreen Australia. Women aged 40-49 and 75 years and older are also eligible for free mammograms<sup>5</sup> if they choose to attend. In deciding whether to attend a screening mammogram, women in these age groups can speak with their doctor and should also consider the potential benefits and downsides of screening mammograms for them.
- Men can get Breast Cancer too. If you notice any new and unusual changes in your breasts it is important to see your doctor without delay, so that the changes can be checked by a health professional.
- Some women have no signs or symptoms and the breast cancer is found during a screening mammogram.

<sup>1</sup> <https://breast-cancer.canceraustralia.gov.au/awareness>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bcna.org.au/breast-health-awareness/breast-awareness/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au/media/347856/CANC10019\\_Brochure\\_BSInfoU40\\_R5.pdf](https://www.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au/media/347856/CANC10019_Brochure_BSInfoU40_R5.pdf)

Additional sources:

Cancer Australia: <https://breast-cancer.canceraustralia.gov.au/symptoms>

Cancer Council: <https://www.cancercouncil.com.au/breast-cancer/symptoms/>  
<https://www.cancer.org.au/about-cancer/types-of-cancer/breast-cancer/breast-cancer-symptoms.html>

BreastScreen NSW: <https://www.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au/about-breast-cancer/signs-and-symptoms>

American Cancer Society: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/about/breast-cancer-signs-and-symptoms.html>

Cancer Research UK: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/breast-cancer/symptoms>

<sup>4</sup> <https://canceraustralia.gov.au/publications-and-resources/position-statements/early-detection-breast-cancer>

<sup>5</sup> <https://canceraustralia.gov.au/publications-and-resources/position-statements/early-detection-breast-cancer>

## **Ovarian Cancer Awareness – Signs & Symptoms**

- The symptoms of ovarian cancer are so vague. For many women, the only signs are cramps, bloating, feeling full or needing to urinate more often—all symptoms which mimic common female complaints;
- Around 70% of women are diagnosed in the advanced stages, meaning only around 29% of these women are expected to survive beyond five years;
- Many women will have entered hospital to undergo exploratory surgery, but most will wake to find they have undergone a complete hysterectomy;
- Invasive surgery is currently the only way of detecting and accurately diagnosing ovarian cancer;

- Instead of being allowed to simply rest and recover from major surgery, they then undergo intense chemotherapy as first line treatment, with few options to personalise and target this therapy to their specific cancer type;
- Many ovarian cancer patients discover that even if their treatment succeeds in getting rid of their cancer, there's an 80% chance that it will come back.

Source: <https://www.ocrf.com.au/ovarian-cancer>