

WEST OF SCOTLAND BREAST SCREENING SERVICE

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Breast Screening?

Breast screening involves taking an x-ray of the breast, this is called a mammogram. Two views of each breast will be taken to ensure all parts of the breast tissue can be examined.

Why is it important to attend?

Breast cancer can affect any woman. Breast cancer affects 1 in 10 Scottish women at some time in their life. It is known that if breast cancer is found at an early stage, treatment has the greatest chance of being successful. The best way of doing this is by having regular mammograms, as you may not be able to see or feel any early changes to your breasts.

Who is invited?

Breast cancer is more common in women over 50. The Scottish Breast Screening Programme invites women aged between 50-70 years old every 3 years. Women over 70 are encouraged to attend by contacting the West of Scotland Breast Screening Service for an appointment.

Where do I attend for breast screening?

You will be invited to attend for your mammogram to the West of Scotland Breast Screening Service centre or a mobile unit.

What happens when I attend for screening?

On arrival, your personal details will be checked and you will then be shown to a private changing cubicle. From there, the radiographer will take you through to another room for your mammograms and will explain the procedure to you. This involves positioning and compressing each breast in the x-ray machine. Your whole visit will last approximately 20-25 minutes.

What should I wear?

As you will be asked to undress to the waist, it may be easier to wear a skirt or trousers rather than a dress. It is also important that you do not wear talcum powder or spray deodorant as this can affect the mammogram. Roll on deodorant is fine.

Is the mammogram sore?

Some women may find the mammogram uncomfortable; a small number may find it painful but the compression will only last a few seconds. The compression is necessary in order to detect early breast disease. If you are worried about the examination or have any questions, please ask the radiographer.

What happens after my mammograms?

Your mammograms will be assessed by specialist clinical staff. Normally, you will then receive your result by post within 3 weeks of your appointment. Your GP will also be notified of the result. Most women will be invited again in 3 years time as part of the routine screening process. You may be invited back for further tests if this is felt to be necessary, but the vast majority of those invited back are found to be clear of any breast disease and will be returned to routine recall.

What happens if I need wheelchair access?

It is possible to attend for screening at a mobile unit with a manual wheelchair, but you will need to contact the screening centre in advance so appropriate arrangements can be made. However, it is not possible to attend a mobile unit with an electric wheelchair. If you are an electric wheelchair user you will need to discuss arrangements with the screening centre in advance of your appointment.

What happens if I have breast implants?

You will be offered an appointment at the screening centre so that your mammograms (x-rays) can be checked for technical quality before you leave. This cannot be done on the mobile units. The technique used by the mammographer to take your mammogram may need to vary so it is important that you let her know that you have an implant before you are screened.

The aim of the breast screening programme is to detect small cancers, so it is important that the mammograms show as much breast tissue as possible. Breast implants can sometimes hide tissue. If necessary there are techniques which can be used by the mammographer to get the best possible result. As noted in the information leaflet accompanying your invitation letter a small number of cancers may not be seen on mammograms.

There is a slight risk of damage to implants during this procedure. If you wish to discuss this further then please contact the screening centre who will provide more information on the procedure. Breast screening does not involve a check on your implant.

What happens if I would like to contact the West of Scotland Breast Screening Centre?

The contact details for the centre are:

Address: West of Scotland Breast Screening Centre
Stock Exchange Court
77 Nelson Mandela Place
Glasgow
G2 1QT

Tel: 0141 572 5800

Fax: 0141 572 5801