



Well Women Breast Screening.

Helping you make the decision that's right for you

The more information you have, the better decisions you make.

What is breast screening?

The purpose of breast screening is to find women with breast cancer so that early treatment can be offered. Breast screening uses X-rays (called mammograms) to find cancers in the breast which are too small to feel.

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK with around 12,000 women dying of the disease every year. Breast cancer is a malignant tumour that is made up of a group of cancer cells found in the milk ducts, which can grow into surrounding tissue and may spread to other areas of the body.

What increases the risk of developing breast cancer?

The risk of developing breast cancer increases with age. Most cancers are found in women aged over 50. A small number of breast cancers are caused by genetic mutations and are found in family groups. Your lifestyle can also increase your risk. Being overweight, drinking alcohol and smoking can all be detrimental.

Who is screening for?

Breast screening is for women over 40 years of age who have no breast symptoms and who haven't had a mammogram within the last 12 months.

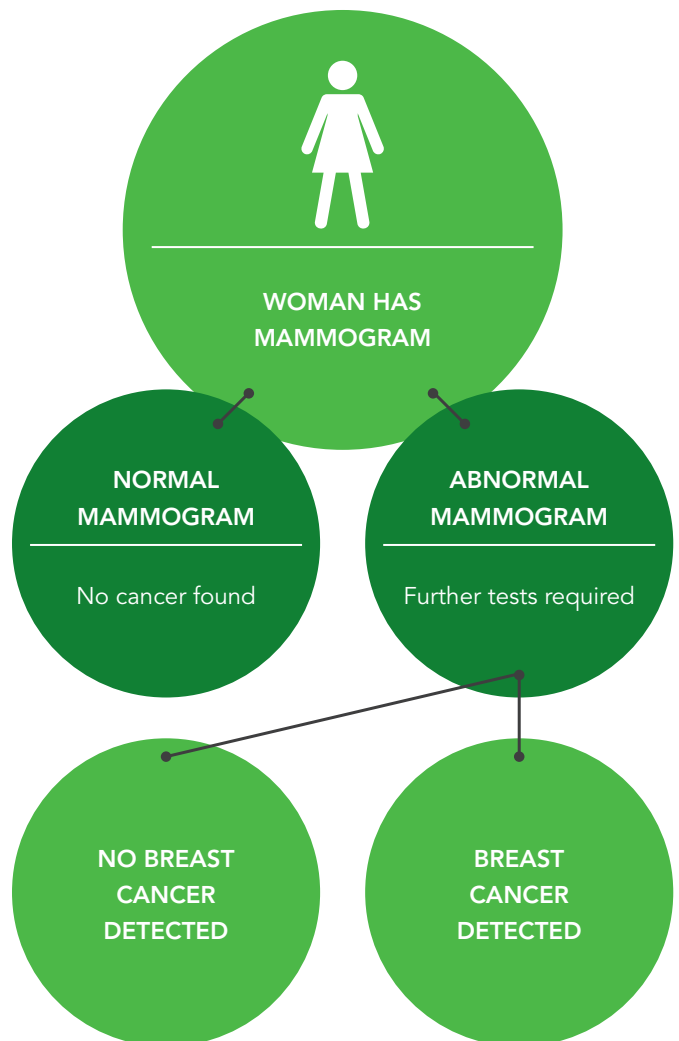
What happens at screening?

You will be asked some routine questions before your examination to help the doctor reporting your images. After undressing to your waist, the mammographer will position you next to the X-ray machine and then will place each of your breasts in turn onto the X-ray table, compressing them firmly with a plastic plate while the picture is taken. This takes only a few seconds and then the pressure is released. At least two views are taken on each side in order to show all of the breast tissue. The mammographer will tell you how you will receive your results and the whole examination should take no more than 10 minutes.

What might the results be?

Your results may be normal. 96% of women will receive a normal result. You may need further tests before a definite result can be given. 4% of all screened women will require further tests.

Sometimes your mammogram may need to be repeated for technical reasons. You may not have been in the correct position or you may have moved during the picture.



It's your life, your health... and your choice.

However, it is not always easy to diagnose breast cancer on a mammogram and you should be aware that you may get a false result, which may lead to unnecessary treatment and anxiety.

You may be told that you need extra tests before a diagnosis can be made. After these tests you may be given the all clear and told that your result is normal. This is called a false positive result and can be very worrying at the time. Four out of every 100 women screened will need extra tests. Only one of these women will have a cancer diagnosed. The others will be classed as normal and should attend screening again when their next appointment is due.

Not all cancers are visible on a mammogram. You may get a normal result when a small cancer is really there. This is called a false negative result. So even after a normal breast screening you should always see your GP if you find a change in your breast.

There is also a chance of over diagnosis and treatment. Some of the cancers found on mammography are slow growing and may never develop into a life threatening cancer. But it's impossible to differentiate these cancers, so some women will have treatment unnecessarily. Studies have shown that if 2000 women are screened regularly for 10 years, 10 women will undergo treatment unnecessarily.

Rarely, cancers are missed on mammograms. Statistics show that there is a likelihood of one cancer being missed when 2,500 women are screened.

Do I want breast screening?

Although breast screening cannot prevent breast cancer it can detect it early, which means that you are less likely to need a mastectomy and more likely to survive the disease. Research shows that surviving breast cancer is now much more possible, with three out of four women diagnosed living at least 10 years. One life is saved for every 200 women that are screened.

What are the benefits of breast screening?

Knowing that no cancer has shown on your mammogram may give you reassurance and you may feel less worried about breast cancer. Detecting cancers when they are very small can mean simpler and less invasive treatment.

The purpose of breast screening mammograms is to find breast cancer early. This reduces your chance of dying from breast cancer due to early diagnosis and simpler treatment.

Making the right choice

Having a mammogram is your choice. We want you to have as much information as possible so you are confident to make that choice. By going to the website address below you can access an online tool which helps calculate your lifetime risk of developing breast cancer, which you can compare with a women of the same age. If you find your risk is low you may decide not to proceed with the mammogram. This is fine. We just ask that you let us know so we can cancel your appointment. If you find your risk is high you may be anxious and want to ask some questions. We have a clinical support service manned by a group of trained doctors who can help you. Call the number below and a phone consultation can be arranged.

The website address to access the online tool is
cancer.uvahealth.com/gailmodel

The number to call to book or cancel a mammogram appointment or to access the clinical support service is 030 3213 0813.

One of our advisors will be happy to help you.



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