

## Summary of recommendations

- If you have had a total mastectomy (all breast tissue removed), a mammogram is no longer necessary. However, you should continue to have regular mammograms of the remaining breast. Similarly, if you have had a breast reconstruction performed, a mammogram of the reconstructed breast is no longer necessary.
- If you have had a lumpectomy or partial mastectomy, you should have a regular mammogram of both breasts.
- It is very important that you also continue to have regular check-ups. These should involve a thorough breast examination and general check by a doctor, and other tests as recommended.

**For further information, talk to  
your own doctor, or**

**BreastScreen SA**

**PHONE 13 20 50**

(cost of a local call)

**Free interpreter services and  
wheelchair access are available**

**Website: [www.breastscreen.sa.gov.au](http://www.breastscreen.sa.gov.au)**

# Have you had breast cancer in the past?



Jan 2008



**Government of South Australia**  
Central Northern Adelaide  
Health Service

**BreastScreen**  
**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Program

## **I have had breast cancer in the past - do I need regular check-ups?**

If you have had breast cancer in the past, it is very important that you have regular check-ups. This is because you are at increased risk of developing breast cancer again. These regular check-ups should involve a thorough breast examination and general check by a doctor, annual mammograms (breast x-rays) and other tests as recommended.

If you have had breast cancer treated by lumpectomy or partial mastectomy, you should have a mammogram of both breasts.

If you have had a breast removed, with or without reconstruction surgery, you should continue to have a mammogram of the remaining breast.

## **Do mammograms detect all breast cancers?**

**While regular mammograms are currently the most effective tool for early detection, they do not cure cancer or prevent breast cancer from developing in the future. Nor are they 100% accurate. This means that in a very small number of women, the mammogram will not find all breast cancers.**

Therefore, it is important for you to be aware of the look and feel of your breasts. If you notice a symptom, such as a lump or nipple discharge, or any other change in your breasts, you should contact your doctor promptly to arrange further investigation.

## **Where should I have my regular mammograms?**

We recommend that you continue to attend your usual breast specialist for annual check-ups. Your specialist will make arrangements for you to attend a public hospital radiology service or private radiology practice for your mammogram. A doctor's referral will be required. All or part of the cost may be reclaimed through Medicare.

**BreastScreen SA is not the best place for you to have mammograms if you have had breast cancer within the past 10 years.**

BreastScreen SA provides screening mammograms to detect the early signs of breast cancer in women who have no breast problems. If you have had breast cancer, special techniques and procedures are often needed when you have your mammogram. For example, you may need detailed pictures taken of the treated part of the breast.

**These special procedures are not available as part of the screening mammogram appointment at BreastScreen SA.**

Your mammograms should be a part of a more comprehensive check-up by your specialist. It is important that the specialist who has treated you for breast cancer has access to your mammograms, in order to provide you with the best possible care.

## **I am no longer under the care of a breast specialist. What should I do?**

You should discuss arrangements for having regular check-ups with your doctor. These should include an annual breast examination and an annual mammogram arranged by your doctor.

## **Can I recommence having screening mammograms at BreastScreen SA?**

If your breast cancer was treated more than 10 years ago and you are no longer under the care of a breast specialist, you are eligible to have a screening mammogram **every year** at BreastScreen SA. **If you choose to attend BreastScreen SA, it is important that you continue to have regular breast examinations by your doctor.**

