

## Women's Health Week – “Check me out” info sheet

### Cervical screening test

Cervical cancer is the fourth leading cancer for women globally. Unfortunately, the symptoms of cervical cancer are often very subtle and can be a common for women. These symptoms include abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge, lower back pain, pain during sexual intercourse and fatigue.

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the cause over 90% of cervical cancer cases. HPV is transmitted sexually through oral sex, vaginal sex, and anal sex. Both women and men can contract and transmit HPV.

Women, or those with a cervix, aged 25 – 74 years of age who have had any sexual contact are eligible to participate in the National Cervical Screening Program.

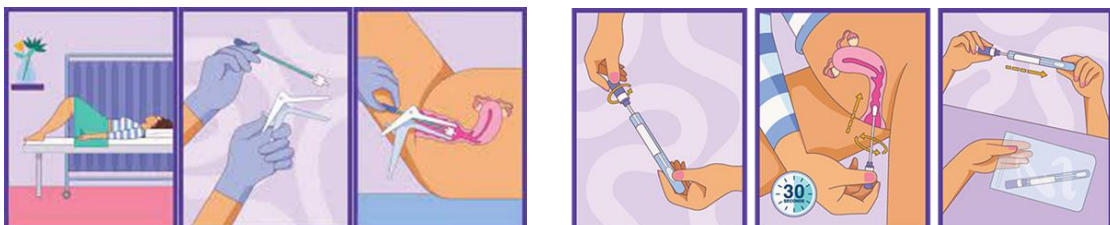
- The National Cervical Screening Program offers a free cervical screening test every 5 years.
- Checks for the presence of HPV inside the vagina, if left untreated HPV can cause changes to the cells in the cervix which can lead to cervical cancer.

In July 2022 self-collection cervical screening was made available for program participants, this will also check for the presence of HPV in the vagina. Chat to your health care provider today about whether self-collection is an option for you.

**Talk to your doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms, regardless of when your last cervical screening test was.**

- Vaginal bleeding in between menstruation (your period), after sexual intercourse or after menopause
- Menstruation that is unusually heavy or long
- Pain or discomfort during sexual intercourse

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/national-cervical-screening-program>



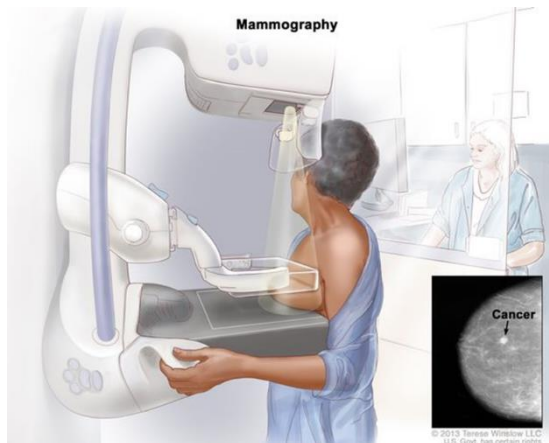
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## BreastScreen Australia Program

In Australia, it is estimated that 1 in 7 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. In 2022, over 20 thousand Australian women were diagnosed with breast cancer. With breast cancer the key to successful treatment is early detection. With the introduction and promotion of the BreastScreen Australia program survival rates of breast cancer has improved greatly.

- Women aged 50 – 74 years of age will receive an invitation in the mail for a free mammogram every 2 years.
- A mammogram is a low dose xray of the breast.
- A mammogram can detect breast cancer before symptoms are felt.

Some women may be recommended to start breast screening before the age of 50, for example, if they have a family history of breast cancer. Chat to your doctor if you believe if you have an increased risk of breast cancer.



**DO-NUT FORGET  
TO SCREEN  
YOUR BREASTS.**



Over 40? You're also eligible for a free mammogram.  
Talk to your GP about whether this is right for you.

Call BreastScreen Australia on  
13 20 50 to book an appointment.



SEE MORE  
SERVICES AT  
BREASTSCREEN.AU  
13 20 50



BreastScreen  
AUSTRALIA

## Breast Self-examination

All women are encouraged to perform a breast self-examination once a month. This allows women to monitor for any signs of symptoms of breast cancer and get to know what is normal for their breast tissue.

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### BREAST SELF-EXAMINATION (BSE)

Do a BSE every month, at the same time, ideally one week after your period and on the same day if post menopausal.

**It takes only 10 minutes.**

Any changes or abnormalities noted during your monthly BSE should be reported to your doctor immediately.



**1.**  
Stand in front of a mirror, hands on hips, and look carefully at each breast separately and comparatively for any changes.



**2.**  
Raise your arms over your head and look at each breast as you turn slowly from side to side.



**3.**  
Bend forward and look at each breast with your hands on your hips and shoulders turned in, then with your arms relaxed and hanging in front of you.



**4.**  
Stand with one hand behind your head and with flattened fingers of your other hand gently examine your entire breast area (breast, nipple, area from armpit to collar bone and below breast) in a circular rubbing motion. Examine your other breast in the same way.



**5.**  
Lying down, with one hand behind your head, follow the same instructions as number 4. Check your nipples for any unusual discharge.

### Know what to look for:

- A new lump in your breast or underarm (armpit)
- Thickening or swelling of part of your breast
- Irritation or dimpling of your breast skin
- Redness or flaky skin in your nipple area or your breast
- Pulling in of your nipple or pain in your nipple area
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk
- Any change in the size or the shape of your breast
- Pain in any area of your breast

**See your doctor if you have any symptoms of concern, regardless of when your last breast screening appointment was.**



<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/breastscreen-australia-program>

## **National Bowel Screening Program**

Bowel cancer is one of the most prevalent cancers in Australia, it effects both men and women. The National Bowel Screening Program aims to reduce deaths for bowel cancer by early detection.

Bowel cancer often has no or very mild symptoms, it can grow in the bowel for years without warning.

Every 2 years, Australians aged 50 to 74 will receive a free bowel screening test in the mail. The test is completed in the comfort of your own home and sent back in the mail. If done, the test can detect bowel cancer in the early stages, this means in most cases that treatment is more successful and changes of survival increase.

Regardless of your last screening time or result, chat to your doctor if any have any of the following symptoms of bowel cancer

- A recent of persistent change in bowel habit
- Blood in your poo or from your anus
- Pain when using your bowels
- Feeling of incomplete bowel emptying
- Pain or lump in the anus or rectum.
- Abdominal pain or swelling

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/national-bowel-cancer-screening-program>

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### Preconception Health Check

The health of the female and male (or male sperm) during time of conception can impact the health and development of the baby, as well impact the health and wellbeing of the mother during pregnancy. A health check with your doctor before planning a pregnancy can assist you in making the right health conscience decisions for your and your baby, as well as manage any preexisting conditions to prepare the body for a pregnancy.

It is recommended to complete this process 3-6 months out from planned conception.

A preconception health check is tailored to the individual and their needs, this may include:

- Testing for immunity to vaccine preventable illnesses and vaccination if required
- Cervical Screening Test (if due)
- Sexually transmitted infection testing
- Genetic carrier screening
- Supplement recommendations
- Preexisting health check & medication review
- Cycle tracking and fertility windows

Link Your fertility website <https://www.yourfertility.org.au/>

It's not about having a perfect body – just a healthy body, because  
healthier parents have healthier babies.



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### Physiotherapy Postnatal Check

During pregnancy, regardless of whether you birthed your baby vaginally or via caesarean section, the pelvic floor and muscles and ligaments surrounding the uterus, pelvis and vagina get a big workout.

The pelvic floor and surrounding muscles and ligaments play an important role in many body functions, including bowel and bladder function and sexual function.

After delivery it takes some time for these muscles and ligaments to recover. For some women, a visit to your local Pelvic Health Physio will aid in this recovery.

What might a postnatal check with a Pelvic Health Physio involve?

- Screening questionnaire for bowel, bladder, and sexual function
- Abdominal wall assessment
- Pelvic floor muscle assessment
- Pain/function assessment

**Chat to your doctor or midwife if you would like a referral to a Pelvic Health Physio**

Thank you for growing your knowledge about women's health with us this week. If you require further information, please contact our Women's Health Nurse on 5551 18455