



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

KNOW YOUR BODY SPOT CANCER EARLY

BREAST
CANCER



TAKE CHARGE

Whether you've heard about it from a friend or family member, seen it in the news, or are just curious: if you want to know more about spotting the signs of breast cancer, this leaflet is for you.

You'll find out what to look out for, tips for telling your doctor if something's not quite right, and some key facts about screening.

When it comes to your health, remember you're in charge.

If you do spot something unusual, tell your doctor. In most cases it won't be cancer – but if it is, finding it early can make a real difference.



KNOW YOUR BODY

You might be surprised to hear that this isn't just about looking out for lumps. Any changes you notice in the size, shape or feel of your breasts are important. Talk to your doctor if you notice any of these:

- A change in the size, shape or feel of your breasts
- A new lump or thickening in one breast or armpit
- Fluid leaking from a nipple if you aren't pregnant or breastfeeding
- A change in the position of a nipple
- Any changes to your skin such as puckering, dimpling, redness or a rash
- Pain in a breast

Don't worry about doing regular checks. Have a look and feel every now and then so you know what your breasts are normally like – this can help you spot any changes. You don't need to check yourself in a set way or at a certain time, you can do this in whatever way is best for you.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR SCREENING INVITE

Screening is for people who are feeling healthy and don't have any symptoms. To be invited for screening, you need to be registered with a doctor. Even if you've been screened, see your doctor if you notice anything that's not normal for you.



There is a national breast cancer screening programme in the UK for women aged 50-70.



When you receive your screening invitation, you'll also be sent information about the screening test. It's important you read this, so you can weigh up whether you'd like to take part or not.

CUT YOUR RISK

There are proven steps you can take to lower your risk of breast cancer.



KEEP A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Weight can have a big impact on the risk of cancer. You could start with small changes to your diet and activity that are easier to stick with.



CUT BACK ON BOOZE

The less you drink, the lower your risk. Try having some more alcohol free days each week.



MOVE MORE

Being more active can reduce your risk so try fitting more activity into your daily routine.

WHAT ELSE AFFECTS YOUR RISK?

- **Age:** As with most cancers, breast cancer is more likely as you get older.
- **Family history:** If close family members have had breast cancer, you may be more likely to get the disease. But most breast cancers happen by chance, rather than due to an inherited risk.
- **Hormones:** Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and oral contraceptives (the Pill) both increase the risk of breast cancer, but are effective medications. The Pill affects the risk of several cancers, but overall it prevents more than it causes. Speak to your doctor to help you decide.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

When you're worried about your health, telling a doctor can feel tough. Here are our tips for getting the most out of your appointment:



Be as stubborn as your symptom. Don't worry you're wasting your doctor's time. If your symptoms haven't gone away, make another appointment. Your doctor will want to know.



Be thorough. Don't dismiss changes as 'part of getting older' or assume they are down to another health condition you might have – mention them to your doctor.



Be open. Tell your doctor anything that's not normal for you, even if it doesn't seem that important.



Be prepared. Have a think about how to describe the changes, and roughly how long you've had them for.

EARLY DIAGNOSIS SAVES LIVES

What if it is breast cancer? Remember, when it's spotted early, treatment is more likely to be successful. Thanks to research, treatments are kinder and more effective than ever.

WE'RE ONLINE...



Learn more about spotting cancer early, including information about screening across the UK, at cruk.org/spotcancerearly

...AND ON THE PHONE



Our Nurse Helpline is there if you're looking for any information or support. Just call **0808 800 4040**.

To provide feedback on this leaflet or find out more about the sources used to create it, call **020 3469 8333** or email publications@cancer.org.uk

And if you have any questions about Cancer Research UK or would like to support us call **0300 123 1022**.



LET'S BEAT CANCER **SOONER**

