



National Institute for Public Health  
and the Environment  
*Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport*

# Population screening for breast cancer



## Why is this screening important?

In the Netherlands, 1 in 7 women gets breast cancer. It is the most common cancer in women.

This screening lets us detect breast cancer early. That is important for your health.

With early detection, there is a better chance that the treatment is successful. And the treatment that you need is often less intensive.

## Taking part, yes or no?

You decide if you want to take part. Population screening has advantages and disadvantages. If you take part, we will take X-rays of your breasts. This will let us see if you have breast cancer even before you notice anything yourself.

In some cases, population screening is less effective. A different check might be better. Talk to your GP about the best course of action if one or more of these apply to you:

- You are very ill and you cannot get better;
- You have a hereditary tendency for breast cancer;
- Breast cancer or ovarian cancer runs in your family.

### Make your own appointment

There are 3 ways:



1. Scan the QR code using your mobile camera. This will take you straight to the website. You need your DigiD.



2. Go to the website: [mijn.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl](https://mijn.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl) You will need your DigiD.



3. Call the Centre for Population Screening. The phone number is in your letter.

## Practical information

### Preparation:

- If you have difficulty walking or are in a wheelchair, you should make your appointment by phone and let them know.
- Wear clothes on your upper body that are easy to remove.
- You can bring a scarf to wear while you wait in the dressing room.
- Do not use ointment (cream), powder or lotion on your upper body. You can use deodorant.
- If you use zinc ointment on your breasts, you need to stop applying this 3 weeks before your appointment.
- Use the toilet before you come to the appointment. Most screening centres do not have toilets.

### Note! Please bring the following with you to the screening:

- The letter you received with this leaflet. You can answer the questions on the back of the letter before the screening.
- A valid proof of identity, such as your ID card, passport or driving licence.



### At your appointment:

- You can always be helped by a female employee if you want.

### The population screening is free

Taking part in the population screening is free. If you need follow-up testing in the hospital, this will be paid by your healthcare insurer. You may have to pay some of the costs. This depends on your excess and how much you have already used. If you have any questions about this, please contact your healthcare insurer.

### Your details

To carry out the population screening, we need to process your data. We work according to the privacy laws and regulations. If necessary, we will contact your GP. If you want to know more about this, please visit: [www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/privacy](https://www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/privacy)

# The screening in 5 steps



If you prefer to watch a video that tells you more about the screening, please go to:  
[www.bevolkingsonderzoekborstkanker.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekborstkanker.nl)



Scan the QR code using your mobile camera. This will take you straight to the website.

## 1 Making an appointment

- You make an appointment yourself.
- **Answer the questions on the back of the letter.**
- **Bring the letter** and your proof of identity, such as your ID card, passport or driving licence.



## 2 The screening centre

The screening will take place at a Centre for Population Screening location. They will carry out the screening.

The screening sometimes takes place in a building, but more often in a large mobile centre. An employee first checks your data.

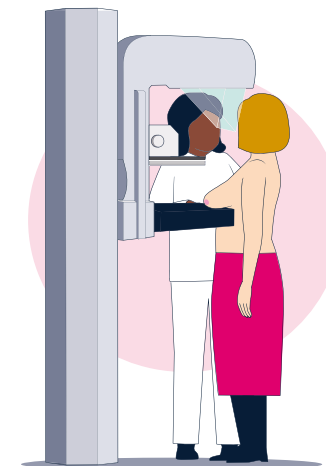
The appointment will take about 20 minutes.

## 3 X-rays

When it is your turn, you go into a changing cubicle and take off your clothes from your top half. An employee will collect you from the dressing room. They will then explain what will happen.

We will take 2 X-rays from each breast. For each X-ray, we will press your breast between 2 plates for a few seconds. This is to get a good picture, with as little radiation as possible.

Although the pressure may be uncomfortable, it does not harm your breasts. You can tell the employee if the discomfort becomes too much. The employee will work with you to make the screening as comfortable as possible.



## 4 Are all the X-rays in good order?

After the examination, you can put your clothes back on. The employee will check that the X-ray quality is good. If it is, then the screening is finished. If not, the employee will take one or more additional X-rays.

We will send the X-rays of your breasts to two doctors. They will look for abnormalities in the X-rays.



## 5 The result

We will send you a letter with the result within 2 weeks.



# What could the result be?

The following three results are possible:

## 1 No abnormality found

We did not find any signs of breast cancer on the X-rays.

You can take part in the population screening again in 2 years.

If you get any symptoms in or on your breasts, you must always contact your GP.



98 out of 100 participants  
get this result

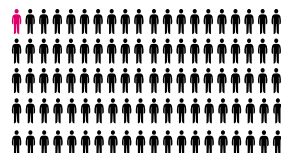
## 2 Not enough information

The X-rays did not give us enough information.

We will need to examine you further in the hospital.

This could mean an additional X-ray or an ultrasound scan.

In most cases, there is nothing to worry about.



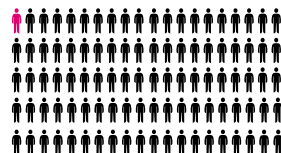
1 out of 100 participants  
gets this result

## 3 Abnormality found

The X-rays show an abnormality that could be breast cancer.

We will need to examine you further in the hospital. This could mean an additional X-ray or an ultrasound scan.

In many cases, we will also remove a small bit of tissue from the breast. This does not necessarily mean that you have breast cancer.



1 out of 100 participants  
gets this result

## What should I do if I have symptoms or changes in my breasts?



Do you see or feel a change in your breasts or armpit? Do you have any symptoms in or on your breasts? Do not wait for the screening; call your GP.



You feel a lump, swelling or hardening in your breast.



There is blood or fluid coming out of a nipple.



You see or feel a bump on your breast.



The size or shape of your breast changes.



There are dents or hollows in your breast.



Your breast feels different from usual.



The skin on your breast is dimpled and looks like orange peel.



You have a wound on your breast that is not healing well.



You have redness, flaky skin or a nipple turning inside out.



You feel a swelling in your armpit.

If you want an explanation of the population screening in easy language, please visit: [www.steffie.nl](http://www.steffie.nl)



More information can also be found at: [www.bevolkingsonderzoekborstkanker.nl](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekborstkanker.nl)



Or scan the QR code using the camera on your mobile. This will take you straight to the website.



If you want to speak to someone for more information or for help, please call the Centre for Population Screening's Customer Service department. You can find the telephone number on your invitation letter.

## Multiple languages / andere talen



This information is available in English at  
Bu bilgiyi Türkçe olarak şu internet sitesinde okuyabilirsiniz

يمكنكم قراءة هذه المعلومات باللغة العربية على الموقع

Te informacje są również dostępne w języku polskim na stronie  
Ви можете прочитати цю інформацію українською на веб-сайті



[www.bevolkingsonderzoekborstkanker.nl/vertalingen](http://www.bevolkingsonderzoekborstkanker.nl/vertalingen)

This leaflet was developed in collaboration with GPs (NHG), radiologists (NVvR), screening experts (LRCB), KWF Dutch Cancer Society, Pharos, the Dutch Breast Cancer Association and the Centre for Population Screening.



This is a publication of:

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Committed to health  
and sustainability