



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

Your invitation for breast cancer screening



This leaflet gives you information about the breast cancer screening. This information will help you decide if you want to take part.

Why are you invited?

The aim of the population screening is to detect breast cancer at the earliest possible moment. The sooner breast cancer is detected, the better the chance of successful treatment. And the treatment you need is likely to be less intensive.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. Breast cancer is most common in women between the ages of 50 and 75 years. That is why we invited you to take part in this population screening.

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a malignant tumour of the breast. Breast cancer may grow slowly or rapidly. Sometimes the tumour can spread to other parts of the body.

Taking part in the population screening

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.

The population screening is free

Taking part in the population screening is free. If you need follow-up testing at 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.

If you want an explanation of the population screening in easy language, please visit: www.steffie.nl



More information can also be found at:
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.



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



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.

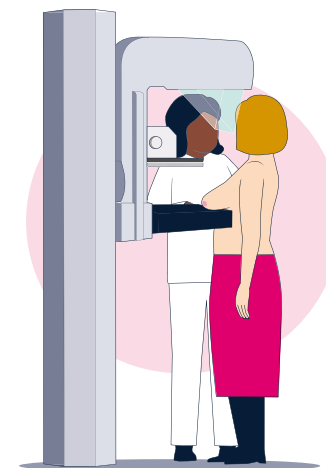


3 X-rays

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:

● 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

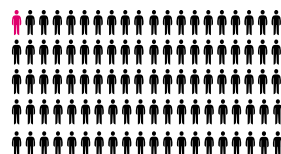
● Not enough information

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.



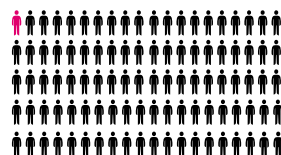
1 out of 100 participants
gets this result

● 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

Questions that many women have

“I am currently being treated or monitored for breast cancer. What should I do?”

You cannot take part in the national programme for breast cancer screening. To cancel your current invitation, go to ‘Mijn Bevolkingsonderzoek’ at mijn.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl and log in with your DigiD.

You can also call or email the Centre for Population Screening. You can find the contact details in the invitation letter.

“I have breast implants. Can I take part?”

Yes, you can take part. We will take your implants into account during the screening. For each X-ray, we will press your breast between two plates. Plastic surgeons say that it is very unlikely that this pressure will damage your implants. That is why they see no harm in you taking part in the screening. Find out more about whether or not to take part at: www.bevolkingsonderzoekborstkanker.nl

“When is it better not to take part?”

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.

Taking X-rays



X-rays make it possible to look at the tissue inside your breasts. This way, we can find any abnormalities that might be breast cancer. This is the best way to detect breast cancer.

The X-rays are assessed by 2 doctors. Each doctor looks at the photos on their own. If they report different results, someone will look at the X-rays again.

The doctors look for signs of breast cancer on the X-rays. Sometimes they find something else. This is called a secondary finding. A secondary finding is something that is found by chance. If necessary, the doctors will tell your GP what was found. Your GP will then call you to discuss it.

The screening is most useful if you take part every time

If you have taken part in the population screening in the past, the doctors will compare the new X-rays with the X-rays from the previous screening. That way, they can see if anything has changed. This can help them find changes early.

We use the least radiation possible for each X-ray

When we make X-rays, we use radiation. There is radiation in your daily life, too. We will take two X-rays of each breast, with as little radiation as possible. Radiation can lead to cancer, but that risk is very small with the amount that we use here.

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

If you see or feel 1 of the following symptoms or changes, do not take part in the national programme for breast cancer screening. Make an appointment with your GP right away. If you have symptoms after taking part in the population screening, you should also go see your GP.



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



You see or feel a bump on your breast.



There are dents or hollows in your breast.



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



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



There is blood or fluid coming out of a nipple.



The size or shape of your breast changes.



Your breast feels different from usual.



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



You feel a swelling in your armpit.

Advantages and disadvantages

As with all medical examinations, population screening has advantages and disadvantages. You decide if you want to take part.

Advantages

We can detect breast cancer earlier and treat it sooner

The national programme for breast cancer screening makes it possible for us to detect if someone has breast cancer earlier. With early detection, there is a better chance that the treatment is successful. And the treatment you need is likely to be less intensive.

Smaller risk of death from breast cancer

People who take part in the population screening regularly are less likely to die from breast cancer than people who do not take part.

Disadvantages

You may feel worried

Waiting for the results can be stressful. You may be referred to the hospital, which can make you anxious.

You may get treatment when it is not needed

Doctors will almost always treat breast cancer. Sometimes a tumour grows so slowly that it will not cause problems during a person's lifetime. In that case, treatment was not really necessary. This happens in about 1 in 10 people with breast cancer. We will not know who did not need treatment. You and your doctor will decide if and how you want to get treatment.

Population screening does not give you complete certainty

There is always a chance that breast cancer will not be detected in population screening.

Your details

We process your data for the population screening. We follow privacy laws when we do this. Our privacy statement explains what happens to your data.

For more information about privacy and the privacy statement, visit:
www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/privacy

Your test results can help to improve the population screening. The results from all participants combined give us a lot of information. That is why we also exchange data with research and care facilities.

If the material is used for scientific research, we make sure that the researcher does not know who the data belongs to.

If further testing is required, we will contact your GP. Your GP will arrange for a referral to the hospital.

You can choose how your data is used

If you do not want your data to be used for quality analysis or scientific research after the population screening, you can let the Centre for Population Screening know. You will find their contact details in the letter with this leaflet.

For more information, go to: www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/privacy

Experiences from others

In the Netherlands, 7 out of 10 people participate in the breast cancer screening. It is quite understandable if you have questions or doubts. Here are some experiences from others:

“I do not take part in the population screening, because it does not give you complete certainty. It is also possible that you will get something between 2 screenings.”

“I take part in the population screening, because I see it as extra support in taking care of my body. You check yourself regularly to see if you can feel or see anything, but the screening can really make sure if anything is wrong.”



Help with your choice

We hope we have given you enough information.

If you want to take part

go to **page 14** to see how to arrange your appointment.

If you do not want to take part

go to **page 15** to see how to cancel your invitation.

If you need more information or find it difficult to decide, there are several sources and people who can help you.

More information:

www.steffie.nl for a simple explanation
www.bevolkingsonderzoekborstkanker.nl
www.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl/borstkanker
www.thuisarts.nl/borstkanker-opsporen

Help from others:

- Ask your GP for advice
- Check out: www.mammarosa.nl

Practical information

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 You will need your DigiD.



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



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.

If you do not want to take part in the population screening?

You can cancel your invitation with your DigiD on the website: mijn.bevolkingsonderzoeknederland.nl

You can also call or email. You can find the telephone number and email address in the letter with this leaflet.



bevolkingsonderzoek

A screening test is a free medical examination for early detection of a disease. The government has three population screening programmes for cancer. These programmes provide screening tests for cervical cancer, breast cancer and colorectal cancer. These diseases can be detected early, even before symptoms start.

We have paid close attention to the content of this leaflet. You cannot derive any rights from it.

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

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.

**bevolkingsonderzoek
nederland**



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