

About your Assessment Service visit



BreastScreen
Victoria

This fact sheet provides some information about what happens now that you have been asked to come to an Assessment Service for further tests.

Why have I been asked to come back?

You have been asked back for further tests because there is an area on your mammogram (breast screen) that needs further investigation. Most women who are called back for further tests do not have breast cancer.

How much do these tests cost?

Any tests required for further assessment are free of charge.

Who can I talk to before I come?

If you would like further information, you can call the Assessment Service and talk to a specially trained nurse counsellor.

What will happen at the Assessment Service?

On arrival you will meet a nurse counsellor who will explain what is to happen during the assessment visit. You will be asked to read and sign a consent form to have the necessary tests performed. The nurse counsellor will answer any questions you may have about the consent form, and the assessment team will support you throughout your visit. A team of specialist doctors will assess the area that needs investigation.

How long will the tests take?

Allow up to half a day at the Assessment Service for your appointment. We can provide an attendance certificate for your workplace.

What tests might I need?

You may need some or all of the following tests:

- **Extra mammograms** – extra mammograms are taken to give doctors a closer look at the area of the breast where changes were noticed. The risk associated with this is exposure to radiation, however very low dose radiation is used in mammography, and the benefits outweigh the risks. Sometimes extra views may be uncomfortable, if you are experiencing excessive discomfort, ask that the procedure be stopped and this will happen immediately.

- **Breast ultrasound** – sound waves are used to show additional detail of the breast tissue. Gel is used on the breast and a probe is held against the skin. There are no risks associated with an ultrasound and it should not be painful or uncomfortable.
- **Breast examination** – a doctor will check for any changes in the breast that can be seen or felt.
- **Breast needle biopsy** – a doctor uses a needle to take a small sample of cells or tissue from the part of the breast that needs checking. More information about these tests will be given to you at the time, if you require this test.

What are my choices?

You may withdraw your consent and request that the tests be stopped at any time.

When will I get the results?

Most women will be told their results on the day. However, biopsy results may take up to a week. A copy of your results will be sent to your doctor.

What happens next?

Most women will be told that no signs of breast cancer were found at the assessment visit and will be invited to come back for screening as usual in two years' time.

What if breast cancer is found?

A small number of women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. If this happens to you, you will meet with the doctor and nurse counsellor who will discuss the findings and explain what will happen next. You will be referred back to your doctor who will arrange a referral for your ongoing care. Most breast cancers found during screening are detected at an early stage. If breast cancer is found early, it is more likely to be small, and successfully treated.

For more information: breastscreen.org.au