

# Should I have screening mammograms?

## Age 40-49



- While screening is primarily recommended for women aged 50 to 69 years of age, **women aged 40-49 without symptoms are eligible to attend.**
- Each woman in her 40s should decide for herself if she would like to attend for breast cancer screening.
- In making this decision you should consider your risk of breast cancer, including family history, and that the benefits of breast cancer screening improve as women get closer to the age of 50.
- The benefits of breast cancer screening for women aged 40-49 may not be as great as for women in the 50-69 age group.

### These are some of the reasons why:

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- The tissue of younger women's breasts can be more dense than that of older women and can show up as white areas on the x-ray.
- As breast cancers also show up as white areas on x-rays this can make breast cancer more difficult to detect in screening mammograms.
- More women in the 40-49 age group will need to be recalled for further tests to exclude breast cancer.
- This means that screening mammograms could be less accurate at finding breast cancer for women in their 40s compared to women aged 50-69.

Therefore, for women in their 40s compared to older women:

1. **It can be more difficult to detect breast cancers.**
  2. **More women will be asked to come back for further tests when they don't actually have breast cancer.**
- It is important for all women to be aware of the look and feel of their breasts. If you notice a symptom such as a lump, or a nipple discharge, or any other change in your breasts you should contact your doctor promptly to arrange further investigation.
  - BreastScreen Australia will continue to review its screening policy as new evidence becomes available. If you would like to discuss this further please see your family doctor.

To book your **FREE** mammogram telephone BreastScreen Tasmania **13 20 50**

