

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I be screened?

Breast cancer is more common in women over 50 and one in nine women will develop breast cancer. Breast screening can help to find small changes in the breast at a very early stage, before there are any signs or symptoms. At this early stage, there is a much higher chance of a full recovery.

How accurate is breast screening?

Mammography is the most reliable method of detecting breast cancer in its early stages. However, no method of screening is 100% accurate as some small cancers are very difficult to see on x rays and some cancers cannot be seen on the x rays at all. On the Isle of Wight, all screening films are reported on by at least two experienced film readers. Isle of Wight cancer detection rates are well above the national standards.

Will it hurt?

Generally no. Everyone is different. Your breasts will be compressed firmly in the x ray machine for a few seconds. Some women find this uncomfortable and a few find it painful. However, any pain should only last whilst you are having the mammogram.

I have implants-can I still come for screening?

Yes you can. You will be invited to attend when your GP practice is invited. In your appointment letter it will ask you to phone us if you have implants. It is important that you do this as we can then send you a leaflet about imaging implants.

I'm 51 and haven't been called yet. Why?

The NHS breast screening Programme invites women from G.P. practices in turn, so not every woman will receive an invitation as soon as they reach 50. (We probably screened your G.P. practice when you were 49 and not eligible) but every woman will receive her first invitation before her 53rd birthday, when we next screen her G.P. practice.

I am in a wheelchair. Will you be able to screen me?

Yes, in most cases. Our machines are able to drop down low enough to x ray you in your chair. However, a lot will depend on your disability, as you need to keep still during the x ray and hold yourself in position. If you are unsure as to whether we will be able to screen you, please phone and ask to speak to one of our radiographers.

Can I be screened privately?

Yes. If you wish to have a routine screen, you will need to ask your G.P. to refer you to the Breast Screening Unit. We will then contact you with an appointment date and time.

If you have a breast problem and wish to be seen privately, again speak to your G.P. who will then refer you to the breast surgeon. They will contact you with an appointment date and time.