

EXPERT OPINION on breast health

“Breast health starts with knowing your own breasts so that you are more likely to notice changes that may lead to problems. Most breast problems are not breast cancer, but a visit to the doctor will help to find out what the problem is and if it needs treatment. Breast cancer should not be left untreated. Many women are alive and well today because their breast cancer was detected and treated early.”

— *Canadian Cancer Society*

Where can you get more information?

For more information contact:

- ▶ Your family doctor or nurse practitioner
- ▶ Your local Public Health Unit
- ▶ Ontario Breast Screening Program:
1-800-668-9304
- ▶ Canadian Cancer Society:
1-888-939-3333

And use the Internet:

- ▶ Ontario Breast Screening Program:
www.cancercare.on.ca/prevention_breastScreening.htm
- ▶ Canadian Cancer Society:
www.cancer.ca
- ▶ Canadian Breast Cancer Network:
www.cbcn.ca

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- Primary Health Care Transition Fund
- Homewood Research Institute, Guelph, ON
- Department of Health Studies and Gerontology
University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON
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Have YOU Been Screened?

Older Women and
Breast Screening



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Have YOU Been Screened?

Older Women and Breast Screening

What is breast screening?

Breast screening refers to regularly checking your breasts. It can help to find any problems that you may have, such as cancer. There is a better chance to cure cancer if it is found early.

Breast screening includes:

1. Physical examination of your breasts by a doctor or a nurse trained in breast screening.
2. Breast X-ray or mammogram.

You should also complete a breast self-examination once monthly. It is important to know your breasts; however, self-examination does not replace breast examination by a health professional or a mammogram.

Why should you be screened?

Small cancers can be found with regular breast screening. Catching cancer early makes it more likely that:

- ▶ you will have more treatment choices
- ▶ the cancer may not have spread to other parts of your body
- ▶ the treatment will be effective

At what age should screening be done?

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, you should take the following steps:

1. Check your breasts on a regular basis. If you notice something unusual, tell your doctor.
2. For women aged 50 to 69 years: have a breast X-ray or mammogram done every two years. For women aged 70 years or older: talk to your doctor or nurse about whether mammography is right for you.
3. If you have been told that you are at high risk of getting breast cancer, ask your doctor if you should be screened more often.



Know the facts

- ▶ Breast cancer is diagnosed more than any other cancer.
- ▶ In Canada, breast cancer is the second leading cause of all cancer deaths.
- ▶ 1 in 9 women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.
- ▶ 1 in 27 women will die from breast cancer.
- ▶ Breast cancer cannot be prevented; early detection is the key to effective treatment.

Who is at risk of developing breast cancer?

Some risk factors that may increase your chance of getting breast cancer include:

- ▶ being a woman
- ▶ being over 50
- ▶ having a family history of breast cancer
- ▶ already having had breast cancer
- ▶ having the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes
- ▶ being overweight or obese after menopause
- ▶ being physically inactive