

What tests might I need to investigate breast changes?

If you or your GP has found a change in your breast, there are a number of steps to help find the cause of your breast change.

These can include:

1. a clinical breast examination
2. questions about your breast changes and family history
3. imaging tests, including mammography and/or ultrasound of your breast/s, which are checked by a radiologist
4. a biopsy, where a sample of your breast tissue is taken from the area and checked.

Not everyone will need all these tests to find the cause of their breast changes. It is important to continue to investigate your breast changes until a cause is found and confirmed by tests.

Acknowledgement of Country



Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and contribution to the life of this region.



Accessibility:

How to get this information in other ways.

To get this information:

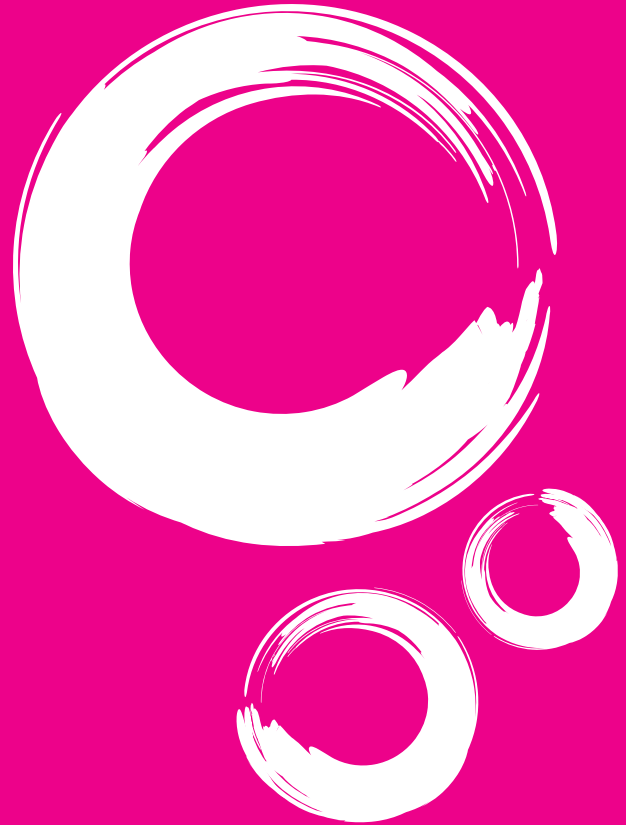
- in large print
- to listen to
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- call (02) 5124 0000**



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Breast changes



BreastScreen ACT

13 20 50

Belconnen | Phillip | City

A program of



ACT
Government

BreastScreen
AUSTRALIA

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government Program

Breast changes don't always mean you have a serious medical problem. However, if you have any symptoms, get them checked by your GP without delay.

What can cause breast changes?

- **Hormonal changes** may cause swollen, tender or lumpy breasts during your menstrual cycle, or if you are taking hormonal treatments for contraception or Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).
- **Fibroadenoma** is a smooth, firm moveable lump made up of fibrous and glandular tissue. This is a non-cancerous breast lump. This type of lump is more commonly found when you are younger, but you can develop this at any age. Tests should be taken to investigate any lump. If the tests show that the lump is a fibroadenoma, you will not usually need treatment unless it continues to increase in size or change shape.
- **Cysts** are fluid filled sacs commonly found in women aged 35 – 50 years or women taking HRT. Cysts are non-cancerous and don't usually need treatment, however if your cyst is painful or forms a lump which can be felt, the fluid within the cyst can be drained.
- **Breast cancer** is when abnormal cells in the breast multiply and form a tumour. About 80% of breast cancer occurs in women aged 50 and over.¹

Changes to take notice of include:

- lump, lumpiness or thickening of skin
- changes to your nipple, such as a change in shape, crusting, a sore or an ulcer, redness, unusual discharge, or your nipple turning inwards (inverted) when it hasn't in the past
- changes to the skin of your breast, such as dimpling, unusual redness or other colour changes
- an increase or decrease in the size of your breast
- swelling or pain in your armpit
- persistent unusual pain in one breast only that is not related to your normal monthly menstrual cycle and stays once your period is finished.

If you have noticed a change in your breast that is unusual to you talk to your GP.

Your GP may:

- examine your breasts, and/or
- refer you for tests.

If you are experiencing an unusual change in your breast such as a lump or nipple discharge, see your GP for further diagnosis through private radiology, a diagnostic centre or a breast surgeon.

It is common to experience breast changes and most of these are not breast cancer.

¹ *About Breast Cancer, Cancer Screening,*
Department Of Health, Australian Government.