Breast care for women
Symptoms, Screening and Staying Healthy
This booklet uses easy words and pictures to help you get information about cancer.

You might want someone to help you look at the booklet so you can talk about it.

There is a Word Bank at the back of the booklet to help with hard words. Any words in bold you can find in the Word Bank.

This booklet can help you learn about cancer. But this is not the same as talking to your doctor. If you are worried about your health, you should talk to a doctor or nurse.
The most common cancer for women is breast cancer.

Women of any age can get breast cancer but the risk is higher when you are over 50.

If your mother, aunt or sister has had breast cancer, you may be more likely to get it.
Cancer is easier to treat if you find it early. You should check your breasts for any changes.

It is very important to check what your breasts feel like at different times of the month.

This is because the **menstrual cycle** causes changes in the breasts. It can make them bigger or more sensitive.
It is best to look in a mirror to check your breasts. You can see if anything looks different.

Some women have one breast larger than the other - this is OK.

Every woman's body is different. You should know what your breasts look and feel like normally. Then you will be able to spot any changes.
Check your breasts when you are somewhere private. This could be in the shower or bedroom.

How to check your breasts

Feel all over the breast.

Then feel around the nipple area.
Breast care for women

If you find any changes or lumps in your breasts it is very important to see your doctor as soon as you can.

Then feel under your arms.

You can ask to see a female doctor if you would like.
Breast care for women

Changes to look for

Look for:
Changes in the shape of your breasts or nipples.

Lumps in your breasts or armpits.

Changes to the skin on your breasts.
Breast care for women

Look for:
Any liquid coming out of your nipples.

Breast screening

If you are aged 50 to 70 you will get a letter inviting you for breast screening. This will happen every 3 years. In some parts of England, women are invited from the age of 47 to 73.

Breast screening means having an x-ray of your breasts. This is called a mammogram. This will check if your breasts are healthy.
Breast care for women

You might have a mammogram at a:

- hospital

- clinic

- mobile unit
Breast care for women

This is what a breast screening machine looks like. This takes the x-ray of your breasts.

It will always be a woman doing the screening.
Breast care for women

What happens

When you arrive at the breast screening unit the nurse will tell you what a mammogram is. You can ask her questions.

The nurse will check your name, address and date of birth.

You will be asked to take your top and bra off.
The nurse will put your breast between two flat plates on the machine. The plates will press against your breast to take the x-rays. The nurse will do one breast at a time.

It only takes a few minutes.

The nurse will go behind a glass screen when the x-rays are being taken.
Some women find it painful or uncomfortable. This should not last long.

After you can ask the nurse how you will find out your results and when this will be.

Sometimes you may be asked to come back for another mammogram because the results are not clear. This does not always mean something is wrong.
Word Bank

Drawing by Tracey Harrison
Volunteer and Illustrator with learning disabilities
**Mammogram**
This is an x-ray of the breasts to see if there are any signs of cancer.

**Menstrual cycle**
The time from the first day of a woman’s period to the day before her next period.

**Screening**
These are special tests that can sometimes find cancer early.
Symptoms
Signs in your body that tell you something is wrong, like feeling tired all the time.

X-ray
This is a picture taken of the inside of your body.
Useful contacts

Drawing by Tracey Harrison
Volunteer and Illustrator with learning disabilities
Breast Cancer Care
Gives information and support to women with breast cancer, and their family and friends.
Phone: 0808 800 6000
Web: www.breastcancercare.org.uk

Brook
Brook gives young people free, confidential information about health, sex and relationships. Find your local Brook centre on their website.
Web: www.brook.org.uk

Cancer Research UK
A charity that is researching treatments for cancer. Its website has lots of information about cancer.
Phone: 0808 800 4040
Web: www.cancerresearchuk.org

Macmillan Cancer Support
A charity that helps people who have cancer. They give practical, medical and financial support. They try to make cancer care in the UK better.
Phone: 0808 808 0000
Web: www.macmillan.org.uk
Useful contacts

NHS Contacts
These contacts give you information about your health and health services:
England and Scotland Phone: 111
Wales Phone: 0845 46 47
Northern Ireland Web: www.hscni.net

Paul’s Cancer Support Centre
Gives help, information and complementary therapies to people with cancer.
Phone: 0207 924 3924
Web: www.paulscancersupportcentre.org.uk

RESPOND
Gives therapy to people with learning disabilities after trauma or abuse. They also offer training and support to carers.
Phone: 0808 808 07 00
Web: www.respond.org.uk
Useful contacts

Books Beyond Words
A series of picture books for people with learning disabilities. The books talk about cancer, health and bereavement.

Web: www.booksbeyonddwords.co.uk
Phone: 020 8877 9799
Email: admin@booksbeyonddwords.co.uk

Cervical Screening - Information for Women with Learning Disabilities
An information folder for women with learning disabilities about going for cervical screening. Produced by Elfrida Rathbone Camden.

Phone: 020 7424 1601
Web: www.elfridacamden.org.uk

FAIR Multimedia
Publishes a range of health leaflets, audio discs and CDs for people with learning disabilities. This includes a series on cancer.

Email: fair@fairadvice.org.uk
Phone: 0131 662 1962
Web: www.fairadvice.org.uk/health-publications.php
Taking Good Care - supporting people with learning disabilities to be breast aware.

Easy read booklet about looking after your breasts for women with learning disabilities. Also includes a guide for carers. Produced by Breast Cancer Care and Cardiff People First.

**Breast Cancer Care**
Web: [www.breastcancercare.org.uk](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk)
Phone: 0808 800 6000

**Cardiff People First**
Phone: 029 2023 1555

---

**Online help**

**www.easyhealth.org.uk**
Has lots of online health information that is easy to understand.

**www.macmillan.org.uk**
Has lots of information about cancer and where to get help. You can also talk to other people with cancer in the online community.
Useful contacts

Videos and DVDs

Leeds Animation Workshop
Has animated films on social issues for people with learning disabilities. There is one called ‘Getting Better’ about going to the doctor and the health clinic.

Phone: 0113 248 4997
Web: www.leedsanimation.org.uk/index.html

Speak Up Self Advocacy
Has DVDs and booklets for people with learning disabilities about health and illness.

Web: www.speakup.org.uk
This easy read booklet was produced by CHANGE
© CHANGE 2016