



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála  
National Screening Service

03 March 2021

Deputy Robert Troy  
[robert.troy@oireachtas.ie](mailto:robert.troy@oireachtas.ie)

**Our Ref:** EG/Communications

**PQ11038/21 To ask the Minister for Health when BreastCheck clinic services will resume in Mullingar, County Westmeath?**

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

BreastCheck was paused between March and end of October 2020 on Public Health advice, in order to protect participants and staff by complying with social distancing guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19. During this time, BreastCheck provided support to the symptomatic breast cancer service, assessing and treating women who were at high risk of breast cancer and whose hospital appointments has been delayed due to COVID-19. This meant that urgent patients who had symptoms were seen quicker, with the aim of improving the outcome of any diagnosis.

Although breast screening resumed in late October last year, in early 2021, many women who were due routine screening had their invitation delayed due to unprecedented levels of virus in the community. We are pleased to say that routine breast screening is again operating nationwide, with invites being sent out to eligible women for screening appointments dated from 08 March 2021.

The focus of the resumption of routine screening is to achieve a maximum invitation rate that is compatible with a safe and controlled follow-up assessment and our treatment capacity within the health service. In resuming screening:

- Invitation letters will be sent first to those who had their appointments cancelled in January 2021
- Invitations for all other women due routine screening will follow
- Women in the assessment phase of breast screening will continue to be seen

In Co. Westmeath, screening will be ongoing from St Vincent's Hospital, Coosan Point Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. Our Mullingar screening location is currently closed due to site works in the area. However, we are working on sourcing another suitable location. Please be assured we are working our hardest to provide the people of Mullingar with their necessary resources and safely resume screening.

It is a harsh reality of COVID-19 that many of our health services are not yet operating in the way they did in the past. Therefore it is important to note that BreastCheck continues to operate at reduced capacity due to social distancing and potential staff limitations due to COVID-19. This means that appointments will take longer, and it may take longer to get an appointment.

Therefore we are asking all participants, including new entrants, to check their telephone details on the register as our new text management system is in place to maximise appointment uptake. If women cannot make their appointment, we are asking them to let us know, so that we can rearrange their appointment and offer the slot to someone else.

Teach Óstaí an Rí, 200 Sráid Parnell, Baile Átha Cliath D01 A3Y8. King's Inn House, 200 Parnell Street, Dublin 1, D01 A3Y8.  
☎ 353 1 865 9300 ✉ [info@screeningservice.ie](mailto:info@screeningservice.ie) [www.screeningservice.ie](http://www.screeningservice.ie)



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An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Cioc  
The National Breast Screening Programme



AN CLÁR NAISIÚNTA SCAETHÁSTÁLA CEIRBEACS  
THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME



An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Putóige  
The National Bowel Screening Programme



An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Scannán de Dhráibéigh  
The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme



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Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend a screening appointment until they are sure that they are clear of the illness. They should visit [HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie) for guidelines and advice.

Women can also contact us on Freephone 1800 45 45 55 or email: [info@breastcheck.ie](mailto:info@breastcheck.ie)

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Fiona Murphy  
Chief Executive  
National Screening Service

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