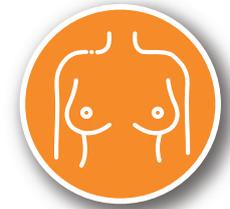


Female Breast Cancer

Early Detection is Vital



National Cancer
Control Programme



Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed invasive cancer in women in Ireland.

Prevention and early detection of breast cancer is very important to protect and improve women's health.

Detect Breast Cancer Early

If breast cancer is found early, your chances of survival are much better than if it is picked up late.

Contact your doctor if you have any of the following signs or symptoms

- a new lump or area of thickened tissue in either breast that was not there before
- a change in the size or shape of one or both breasts
- bloodstained or watery discharge from either of your nipples
- a lump or swelling in either of your armpits
- dimpling on the skin of your breasts
- a rash on or around your nipple
- a change in the appearance of your nipple, such as becoming sunken into your breast
- An abscess in your breast

Breast pain is **not** usually a symptom of breast cancer. You can read more about breast pain on the [HSE website](#)

Know the signs and symptoms of breast cancer and talk to your GP without delay if you are concerned.

Reduce Your Risk of Breast Cancer

- Try to maintain a healthy body weight. Excess body weight increases inflammation and hormone levels (including oestrogen and insulin), increasing breast cancer risk for post-menopausal women.
- Reduce the amount of alcohol you drink, or avoid alcohol altogether. Alcohol damages the body's cells and affects hormone production, increasing breast cancer risk.
- If you have a baby, consider breastfeeding if possible. Breastfeeding affects hormone levels and breast cells, reducing breast cancer risk.
- Try to be physically active. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week. Physical activity reduces your cancer risk by reducing inflammation, helping the body use insulin more effectively, helping maintain a healthy body weight, reducing inflammation and promoting healthy hormone levels.
- If you are considering taking oral contraceptives or hormone replacement therapy (HRT), talk to your GP about your options and any associated cancer risk. Oral Contraceptives and HRT alter levels of hormones, affecting cancer risk in women.
- Try to eat healthy foods. Non-starchy vegetables, foods rich in carotenoids (e.g. kale, spinach, watermelon, cantaloupe, bell peppers, tomatoes, carrots) and foods rich in calcium may help to reduce breast cancer risk. A healthy diet helps maintain a healthy weight, which reduces breast cancer risk for post-menopausal women.
- Do not smoke. If you smoke, try to quit. Tobacco contains chemicals that cause cancer. Tobacco products include cigarettes, roll your own, chewing, pipes or cigars.

For more information visit

- [HSE's National Cancer Control Programme Cancer Prevention Hub](#)
- [HSE's National Cancer Control Programme Early Detection of Cancer Hub](#)