

Health Unit MEDIA RELEASE



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Ontario Breast Screening Program Urges More Ontario Women Age 50-69 To Get Screened

Health professionals, breast cancer organizations and survivors have done an excellent job of raising public awareness of breast cancer over the past decade. Despite this, **not enough Ontario women aged 50-69 are being screened and even fewer are benefiting from participation in the provincially organized screening program.** Only 56.4% of Ontario women aged 50-69 have screening mammograms (breast x-rays), approximately half of them through the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) and the rest through stand-alone sites.

Many studies show that screening mammograms save lives when they are done regularly for women aged 50-69. Cancer Care Ontario recommends that women in this age range have a mammogram at the Ontario Breast Screening Program. Benefits of attending an OBSP site are assurance of high quality screening, self-referral, a result letter sent to you and your doctor, follow-up of abnormal screening results and a reminder letter when it is time to return for screening.

I feel healthy. Why do I need to go for breast screening?

The best time to go for breast screening is when you feel healthy. Having mammograms and clinical breast exams regularly help detect cancer early, before it has a chance to spread. Five years after diagnosis, more than 95% of women are alive and well if their breast cancer is detected early. Early detection saves lives!

Mammograms are the best breast cancer screening test we have.

Many studies show that regular mammograms for women aged 50-69 reduce deaths from breast cancer by up to a third. A mammogram is not a perfect test though. It finds eight out of ten cancers. This is one of the reasons it is important to be screened regularly.

Talk to your doctor about breast screening.

We recommend you talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner about breast screening. Another option, if you are 50 or over, is to make your own appointment to be screened at an Ontario Breast Screening Program site. This service is free-of-charge (funded by the government).

What if my breast screening shows I need more tests?

Most women who go for breast screening do not have cancer. For every 200 women screened at the OBSP, 16 are referred for further tests, and only one will have breast cancer. Most women who require follow-up have tests that are non-invasive, such as a follow-up mammogram and/or ultrasound.

Women age 50 or over?

When was the last time you went for breast screening? If it's been more than two years, or if you've never been screened, it's time to make an appointment. It could save your life.

To make an appointment for breast screening, please call an Ontario Breast Screening Program site near you or call 1-800-668-9304.

Local Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) sites:

Brockville General Hospital	(613) 345-8304
Kingston OBSP Centre	(613) 384-4284 1-800-465-8850
Winchester District Memorial Hospital	(613) 774-2422 ext. 5617
Ottawa OBSP Centre	(613) 728-0777 1-800-465-6226
Renfrew Victoria Hospital	(613) 432-4851 1-800-916-6277

For more information on breast health or healthy lifestyles contact the Health Unit at 613-345-5685 or our Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853.