



# Your guide to Breast Cancer

Helpline

3656 0800

[www.cancer-fund.org/pink](http://www.cancer-fund.org/pink)

## What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a tumour that starts in breast tissue. There is no known cause of the disease, however your risk may increase due to ageing, direct family members being diagnosed, having breast cancer previously, and lifestyle factors such as excessive alcohol consumption and physical inactivity.



Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Hong Kong\*

3rd

Breast cancer ranks as the 3rd leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women in Hong Kong\*



One in 15 women in Hong Kong are at risk of developing breast cancer\*\*



There were 4,108 new breast cancer cases in 2016 among women in Hong Kong\*

56

is the median age of women with breast cancer in Hong Kong\*

## Early detection

Finding breast cancer early means that you have more treatment options and a better chance of recovery. When diagnosed early, the physical and emotional trauma is reduced as treatment does not need to be as aggressive.

Source: \* Hong Kong Cancer Registry, Hospital Authority 2018 (figures from 2016)  
^ Lifetime risk before age 75

## Do you know your breasts?

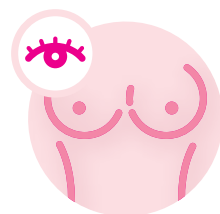
It is common for women's breasts to change. Changes take place during menstruation, pregnancy or when breastfeeding. It is important to know your breasts so you can identify anything unusual.

### Breast cancer symptoms

- A lump, lumpiness or thickening
- Changes in the skin, such as puckering, dimpling or a rash
- New and persistent discomfort or pain in the breasts or armpit
- Change in the shape or size of a breast
- Discharge from the nipple, a nipple rash or a change in its shape

Women should be familiar with the normal look and feel of their breasts. If you notice any of the above changes, please consult your doctor for a clinical breast examination. Checking your breasts regularly could save your life!

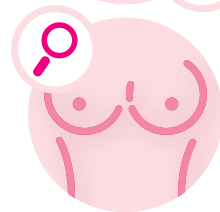
### Check your breasts in 3 easy steps



**1 Look**  
for changes in your breasts, or changes in/discharge from the nipple



**2 Feel**  
for lumps, thickening, puckering, dimpling of the skin, unusual redness, colour change or pain



**3 Compare**  
the shape and size of your breasts and both nipples with your last check, for any unusual changes

## How can I be screened?

If you detect changes in your breasts, your doctor will examine you and enquire about your family history. Your lymph nodes, underarms, and neck lymph nodes will be examined for swelling, pain, or other abnormal conditions. If there are any unusual findings, further tests will be done to confirm the diagnosis, such as an ultrasound or mammogram.

### Mammogram

A mammogram is a breast x-ray designed to detect breast abnormalities. A radiographer will position and compress each breast between two flat plates for 10-15 seconds while the x-ray is taken. However, young women tend to have denser breast tissue which makes it harder to detect tumours via a mammogram. It is therefore less effective for women below 40 years of age.

### Ultrasound

An ultrasound is used to assess the general condition of the breast. It determines whether a lump is a cyst or a solid mass that could be present and detects if there is swelling in the underarm lymph nodes. Ultrasound testing works by transmitting high-frequency sound waves through the breast. The sound waves bounce off surfaces in the breast, and are recorded as video or photos, which the radiologist can use to make a diagnosis.

### What if an abnormality is found?

If a lump or abnormality is found, a small amount of breast tissue will be taken to determine if cancer cells are present. This tissue will then be examined under a microscope and further tests may be requested. For more information on breast cancer treatment, visit our educational mini-site.

Learn more about breast cancer:  
[www.cancer-fund.org/pink](http://www.cancer-fund.org/pink)

## Should I get screened?

At present, there is insufficient scientific evidence to advocate for or against population-based mammography for local asymptomatic women at average risk. All women who consider breast cancer screening should be adequately informed about the benefits and risks. Women at high risk (e.g. carriers of confirmed BRCA1/2 gene mutations, with family history of breast cancer or ovarian cancer, etc.#) should seek a doctor's advice for screening methods, frequency and starting age for screening. If you notice anything unusual in your breasts, visit your doctor to discuss the need for a screening.

## How can I reduce my risk?#

- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a healthy body weight and waist circumference
- Consume less alcohol

Source: # 'Prevention and Screening for Breast Cancer Booklet', Department of Health 2016

We provide FREE services and professional guidance so no one faces cancer alone. For our FREE support call us now.

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