

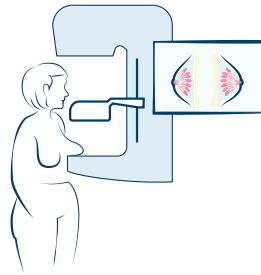
Information about BreastScreen Norway

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women in Norway. One in nine women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. A mammogram is an X-ray picture of the breasts that can detect breast cancer before it causes symptoms, such as a lump you can feel.

What happens during a mammogram?

The entire appointment takes 10-20 minutes. First, a radiographer will ask you a few questions and look for any changes on your breasts. The doctors use this information when they read your images.

A mammogram can be done regardless of the size of your breasts. The mammography machine compresses or flattens the breasts for a few seconds while the images are taken. Some women find this uncomfortable, but we do this to obtain the highest-quality images.



What happens afterwards?

Two doctors independently check your images for any abnormalities. You will receive a written response, regardless of the result. This usually takes 2-4 weeks. Doctors do not find anything wrong in most of the women who are examined.

You may need additional follow-up

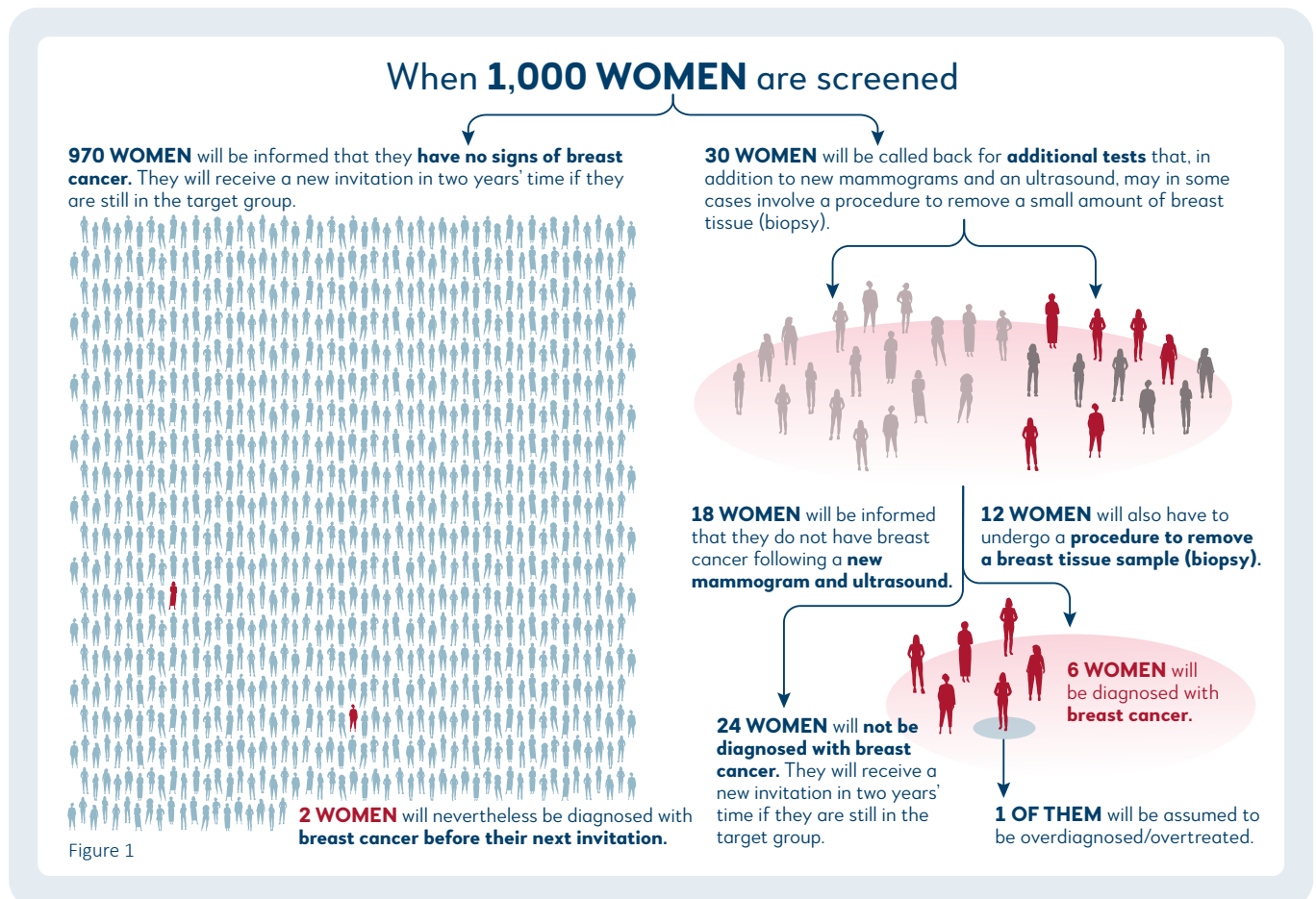
Some women are called back for additional tests at a breast centre. This is more common for women having their first mammogram and those with breast implants. For most women, the additional examination involves new mammograms and an ultrasound. In some cases, it is also necessary to take a tissue sample from the breast (biopsy). Being recalled for additional tests does not necessarily mean that you have breast cancer.

Have you had surgery for breast cancer?

If you are still attending regular check-ups, do not stop going to your appointments. Some of your check-ups can take place through BreastScreen Norway if this has been agreed with your doctor. When your control period is over (up to ten years), you may attend regular screening through BreastScreen Norway. Let us know if we should stop the invitations during the control period.

Are you worried about hereditary breast cancer?

Consult your doctor (fastlege) about counselling from the department of medical genetics in your health region.



Is this something for me?

Norwegian health authorities recommend breast cancer screening every other year for all women between the ages of 50 and 69. This is in line with recommendations from the World Health Organization and the EU. The benefit is best documented in the 50 to 69 age group.

Routine examinations such as breast cancer screening has both advantages and disadvantages. You can read more about this below to decide whether you will accept this offer.

Advantages

Fewer deaths from breast cancer: The most important benefit of breast cancer screening is fewer deaths from the disease. This has been shown in a number of studies. A conservative estimate of the effect is shown in *Figure 2* to the right.

More gentle treatment: Screening allows breast cancer to be detected at an earlier stage. This increases the possibility of keeping your breast after an operation, and for more gentle treatment.

Of 1,000 women who **do not participate** in BreastScreen Norway, 23 will die of breast cancer before they turn 80.



This will be **reduced** by 4 cases, to 19 per 1,000 women, among those who **participate regularly**.

Figure 2



Disadvantages

False alarm: If the mammograms show changes in your breast, you will be called back for additional tests. For most women, these tests show that the changes are harmless, and that it was a “false alarm”.

Stress and anxiety: Some may feel anxiety and stress while waiting for their results and if they are called back for additional tests.

Overdiagnosis and overtreatment: We find more breast cancer among women who go to screening than among those who do not go to screening. One reason is that some breast cancer tumours grow so slowly that they would not have been detected if the women had not been screened. It is possible

to tell the difference between breast cancers that have the ability to grow slowly and those that have the ability to grow quickly, and adjust the treatment accordingly. However, it is impossible to tell which breast cancers grow so slowly that it is not necessary to provide treatment. This means that some women receive too much treatment. We do not know which women this applies to, but we know that they are mainly in the group that receives the gentlest treatment.

Since we can't tell which breast cancers do not need treatment, we can't count them either. Based on our current knowledge, our best estimate of the extent of overdiagnosis is as you see in *Figure 1* on the reverse side of this sheet.

If breast cancer is detected, you will receive follow-up at the breast centre. Screening, diagnostics and treatment are based on national guidelines and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Mammograms do not find all breast cancers. Breast cancer can also be discovered between two screenings. **For this reason, you should always consult a doctor if you notice a new lump or changes in your breast, even if you recently had a mammogram.**

Mammography uses X-rays, which in theory can increase the risk of developing breast cancer. The risk is very low, even with regular participation in BreastScreen Norway.

Please visit our website for more information, statistics, references and information on discussions about the effect of breast cancer screening. You can also talk to your doctor about breast cancer screening.

Read more at krefregisteret.no/mammografi