

Breast Cancer

Find cancer early



1 in 7 women in Ireland will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. It is most common in women over 50 years of age, but it can happen in younger women too.

Treatment options and survival rates are better than ever – especially when breast cancer is found early.

Find breast cancer early

If breast cancer is found early, it's easier to treat and there's a better chance of recovery.

Contact your doctor **without delay** if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- A new lump that you can feel in either of your breasts
- A new lump that you can feel in either of your armpits
- A change in the size, shape or feel of one or both breasts, e.g. a new area of thickened tissue or lumpiness in either breast or armpit that was not there before
- Skin changes on your breast, such as puckering or dimpling (the skin may look like orange peel)
- An abscess (infected boil) in your breast – this may appear as a red, tender area on your breast
- A change in the appearance of your nipple, such as the nipple flattening or sinking into your breast or turning inwards
- Bloodstained or watery discharge from either of your nipples
- A rash or eczema on or around your nipple.

For tips to reduce your risk of breast cancer, see the other side of this page.

Reduce your risk of breast cancer



Alcohol: You can reduce your risk of breast cancer by avoiding alcohol altogether, or at least by cutting down the amount you drink. The less you drink, the lower your risk.



Body weight: Women who are overweight after the menopause have a higher risk of breast cancer. If you are overweight, even modest sustained weight loss can help reduce your risk of breast cancer.



Physical Activity: Being active reduces your risk of breast cancer. Any amount of activity is better than none. Aim for at least 2 hours and 30 mins of moderate physical activity or 1h 15mins of vigorous physical activity across each week. Include muscle strengthening activities at least 2 days a week. Moderate physical activity makes you a little out of breath but you can talk comfortably. Vigorous activities will raise your heart rate, make you sweat and feel out of breath.



Breastfeeding: Breastfeeding reduces the mother's risk of breast cancer. The longer a woman has breastfed over the course of her life, the greater the protection.



Oral Contraceptive Pill (OCP): The OCP can cause a small increased risk of breast cancer. Each person's risk will be different, talk to your GP about what is right for you.



Tobacco: While it is not clear whether smoking increases breast cancer risk, we do know that smoking increases risk of at least 15 other types of cancer. The best form of defence is not to start smoking. Quitting tobacco products reduces cancer risk.

For more information, visit:

- www.hse.ie/preventcancer
- www.hse.ie/findcancerearly