

What is a cancer screening test?

Cancer screening tests can find early signs of cancer. The tests can also find changes to cells or find infections in your body that may cause cancer in the future.

The Australian Government offers three national cancer screening programs to find early signs of bowel, breast and cervical cancer. If cancer is found at an early stage, the chances of surviving are higher.

The cancer screening programs are free if you have a green or blue Medicare card. If you do not have a Medicare card, talk to your GP about how much the tests will cost.

Cancer screening tests could save your life.

If you would like more information about bowel, breast or cervical cancer screening, visit

- cancersa.org.au
- breastscreen.sa.gov.au
- wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au/cervicalscreening

If you need support after being diagnosed with cancer, call **Cancer Council SA** on **13 11 20**.



This resource has been developed by Wellbeing SA, BreastScreen SA and Cancer Council SA.

The resource was first developed in 2017 during the CALD Women's Cancer Screening Ambassadors Project.



Cancer screening

How to find cancer early



For free* and confidential information and support about cancer, Monday to Friday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm:

- call Cancer Council **13 11 20**
- chat online at cancersa.org.au
- email askanurse@cancersa.org.au

Free* interpreting service is available on **131 450**.

*Cost of a local call

Reviewed in Dec 2022

Information and support

13 11 20
cancersa.org.au



Bowel cancer screening

Bowel cancer often develops without any symptoms. If bowel cancer is found at an early stage, the chances of surviving are higher.

Bowel cancer screening involves completing a Faecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT). The FOBT looks for blood in your faeces that cannot be seen. If blood is found, you may need further testing to find the cause of the blood.

Every two years the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program will post a free FOBT kit to all Australians aged 50-74 years.

Cancer Council SA recommends you:

- Participate in bowel cancer screening every two years if you are aged 50 years or older.
- See your GP if you have symptoms. Symptoms include bleeding from your rectum, seeing blood in the toilet or on the toilet paper after emptying your bowels, or unexplained constipation or diarrhoea.
- See your GP if you have a family history of bowel cancer.

If you are aged 50-74 years it is important you complete and return your FOBT kit when it arrives in the post from the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program.

Visit ncsr.gov.au or call the National Cancer Screening Register on **1800 627 701** to:

- find out when the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program will send you a free FOBT kit
- order a replacement test if you have lost or damaged your FOBT kit, or if it has expired
- download more resources in your language.



Breast cancer screening

Breast cancer can develop without noticeable symptoms. If breast cancer is found at an early stage, the chances of surviving are higher.

A breast screen is an X-ray of the breasts. Having a regular breast screen can find breast cancer early, often before you can feel it, when it is small and easy to treat. A breast screen is currently the best test available to find breast cancer in women who do not have symptoms.

Cancer Council SA and BreastScreen SA recommend you:

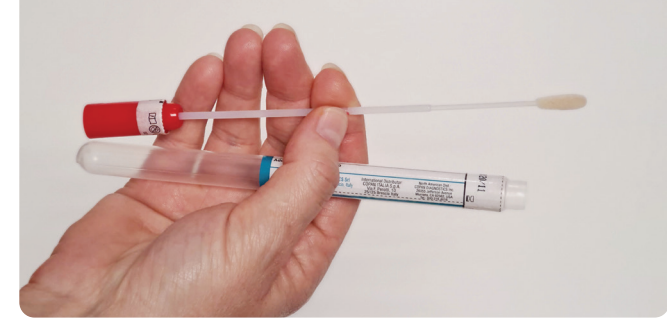
- Have a free breast screen every two years with BreastScreen SA if you are aged 50 to 74 years. If you are aged 40-49 or 75 and older you can also have a free breast screen.
- Check your breasts regularly for any changes, even if you are younger than 50 years or are having regular breast screens.
- See your GP as soon as possible if you notice any changes to your breasts. Changes include a lump in your breast or a change in the size or shape of your breasts.
- See your GP if you have a family history of breast cancer.

Call BreastScreen SA on 13 20 50 to book your free breast screen.

Please tell them if you need an interpreter when making your appointment.

Visit breastscreen.sa.gov.au:

- for more information about having a breast screen
- to download resources in your language.



Cervical cancer screening

Most cervical cancers can be prevented through regular cervical screening.

There are now two ways you can have a Cervical Screening Test.

1. A self-collection test, which uses a long-handled cotton bud to collect your own cells from the vagina. You can take this test in private at the GP clinic or in some cases you can do the test at home if pre-arranged with your GP.
2. A sample collected by a GP or nurse, where a speculum is inserted and cells are collected from the cervix.

Both options are equally safe and effective. Talk to your GP or nurse about which option is right for you.

When you book your appointment, you may wish to:

- ask if self-collection is available at the clinic
- ask about possible charges
- request a female GP or nurse
- request an interpreter if you need one
- request a double appointment.

Cancer Council SA and Wellbeing SA recommend:

- All women and people with a cervix aged 25-74, who have ever had any sexual contact, should have a Cervical Screening Test every five years.
- Children aged 12-13 have the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. The vaccine is provided for free in secondary schools or at a GP clinic under the National Immunisation Program.
- You see your doctor if you have any symptoms such as unusual bleeding or pain during sex.

Visit wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au/cervicalscreening or search for finding cervical cancer early at cancersa.org.au for more information.