

Breast Cancer Awareness Update Fact Sheet

Keep it Simple!

Overview:

Breast cancer is the most common cancer affecting women. Early detection significantly improves survival, and GPs play a vital role in screening and referral. Increased screening has led to earlier diagnoses. Stage 1 breast cancer now has a 100% 5-year survival rate – among the best outcomes globally..

Key Facts

- 1 in 7 women will be diagnosed by age 85.
- Over 20,000 cases are diagnosed annually in Australia.
- Over 200 men are diagnosed annually in Australia.
- Approximately 58 women are diagnosed every day.
- Most cases occur in women over 50.

Risk Factors

- Non-modifiable: age, sex, family history, genetic mutations eg BRCA1/BRCA2 mutations.
- Modifiable: obesity, smoking, alcohol, sedentary lifestyle

Screening:

Breast Screen Australia offers free mammograms every two years to women aged 40 and over across all states and territories. While the program actively invites women aged 50 to 74 to participate, women aged 40 to 49 and those 75 and older can also access free screening but may not receive an invitation.

- Ages 50-74: Notified for free mammograms every 2 years.
- Ages 40-49: Free screening available throughout Australia
- High-Risk: Annual mammograms & MRI from age 30.
- Australia has one of the world's best screening programs.

Symptoms:

- Lump, shape change, skin dimpling, nipple changes/discharge, pain, persistent swelling, axillary lumps.

Diagnosis:

- Triple Assessment: 1) History and examination 2) Imaging 3) Biopsy.
- Any new palpable lump should be biopsied (GPs can order this; ideally core biopsy)
- Refer to a specialist for concerning findings.



Management:

- Early-stage: Surgery +/- radiation.
- Advanced: Surgery, chemotherapy, targeted therapy +/- radiation
- Chemotherapy timing – depends on size and type of cancer
- Metastatic: Palliative systemic treatment.

Allied Health:

- Vital aspect for the psychosocial health of the patient.
- Psychologists and dieticians play an important role to assure psychological and physical health through the cancer journey.

GP's Role:

- Promote screening & early detection.
- Refer high-risk patients.
- Support post-treatment care.
- Encourage healthy lifestyle changes and involvement of allied health.