



Public Health
England



NHS Breast Screening Programme

Information for women diagnosed with breast cancer
between screening appointments



We know this is a difficult time and you will be concerned about your treatment and future health. You may also be wondering why you have developed breast cancer, especially if you have had screening tests in the past. This flyer contains important information about screening results and cancer.

Breast screening and cancer

Screening helps detect breast cancer early but it is not perfect.

Of 1,000 women screened for breast cancer who have a normal result, around 3 will develop breast cancer before their next 3-yearly screening appointment. These are known as **interval cancers**.

Interval cancers have several causes.

1. Most interval cancers are cancers that develop between screening tests.
2. Some are cancers that were present at screening but didn't show up on mammograms (X-rays).
3. A small number are cancers that may have been missed on mammograms by the people checking them.

Reviewing your previous screening results

The NHS Breast Screening Programme will routinely review your previous test results if you have been screened in the last 3 years and have an interval cancer. Please tell your key worker/breast care nurse if you'd like to know the results of this review. You can make this choice at any time.

Reviews are an essential part of every high-quality screening programme. Information we gather from individual cases helps to improve the programme and also helps us to learn more about how cancers develop and how they are diagnosed.

Visit www.nhs.uk/breast for more information.