

NHS breast screening: information for trans and non-binary people

Breast screening for trans people at a glance

- Trans women and non-binary people assigned male at birth who are registered with a GP as female are invited for breast screening.
- Trans women and non-binary people assigned male at birth who are registered with a GP as male are not routinely invited for breast screening but can request screening.
- Trans men and non-binary people assigned female at birth who are registered with a GP as female are invited for breast screening.
- Trans men and non-binary people assigned female at birth who are registered with a GP as male are not routinely invited for breast screening but can request screening if they still have breast tissue that needs screening.

Breast screening

Breast screening is a free NHS test that is carried out at breast screening centres and at mobile breast screening units across England.

Breast screening can find cancers when they are too small to see or feel. Finding and treating cancer early gives you the best chance of survival. Screening will miss some cancers, and some cancers cannot be cured.

Taking part in breast screening is your choice. You can find out more information from your GP or by visiting www.nhs.uk/breast or www.gov.uk/breast-screening-leaflet.

Breast screening invitation process

All individuals from 50 up to their 71st birthday who are registered as female with their GP are automatically invited to breast screening. When you are due for screening, we will send you an invitation letter. It is not possible for individuals registered as male to have mammograms as part of the NHS Breast Screening Programme, but your GP can refer you for mammograms at a hospital near you (see the information for people registered as male below).

We invite you for breast screening every 3 years. Your first invitation will arrive sometime between the ages of 50 and 53. If you are trans it is important that your GP makes sure that your records are up to date so you are invited for screening correctly.

If you do not want to be invited for breast screening, you need to contact your local breast screening office. They will explain how you can opt out of breast screening.

It is important that you feel that you are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Let your screening service know if you would:

- like your appointment at the beginning or end of a clinic
- prefer to be screened at your local breast screening centre rather than a mobile breast screening unit

Visit www.nhs.uk/breastscreening for your service's contact details.

Trans men and non-binary people assigned female at birth

Registered with a GP as female

If you are aged from 50 years up to your 71st birthday and registered with a GP as female, you will be routinely invited for breast screening. We recommend you consider having breast screening if you have not had chest reconstruction (top surgery) or still have breast tissue.

If you are worried about visiting a breast screening unit you can ring to arrange a more suitable appointment. For example, we can arrange for you to have an appointment at the beginning or end of a clinic.

Registered with a GP as male

If you are registered with a GP as male, you will not be invited for breast screening. If you have not had chest reconstruction (top surgery) and are aged 50 or over we suggest you talk to your GP. They can arrange a referral for you to have mammograms at a hospital near you.

You should keep aware of the symptoms of breast cancer, and contact your GP if you notice any unusual changes. Visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer/symptoms/ for more information on symptoms of breast cancer.

If you have had chest reconstruction (top surgery), we advise you have a conversation with your surgeon about the amount of breast tissue you have remaining. If they confirm you still have breast tissue, you can ask your GP to refer you for mammograms at a hospital near you.

Trans women and non-binary people assigned male at birth

Registered with a GP as a female

If you are aged from 50 up to your 71st birthday and registered with a GP as female, you will be routinely invited for screening. Long-term hormone therapy can increase your risk of developing breast cancer so it is important that you consider going for breast screening when you are invited.

Registered with a GP as male

If you are registered with a GP as male, you will not be invited for breast screening.

If you have been on long-term hormone therapy you may be at increased risk of developing breast cancer. Your GP can arrange a referral for you to have mammograms at a hospital near you.

Breast screening test

A breast X-ray called a mammogram is used to look for signs of cancer. Each breast is pressed firmly between the plates of an X-ray machine for a few seconds. The pressure is needed to get good images and also reduce the radiation dose. Your test will be carried out by a specially trained female mammographer.

Some people say having a mammogram is uncomfortable and a few may find it painful, but the discomfort should pass quickly.

Breast screening usually involves 2 X-rays of each breast. People who have implants are offered the choice of additional X-rays so the mammographer can see as much breast tissue as possible.

Preparation

If you are a trans man or non-binary person assigned female at birth who is registered with a GP as female, has not had chest reconstruction (top surgery) and wears a binder, you will need to remove this before having your mammogram.

Private changing facilities will be available so that you can remove your binder just before having your mammogram. If you have any concerns about your appointment, you can contact your local breast screening service.

Breast screening results

For most people the mammograms will show no signs of cancer. If changes are seen on your X-rays, you will be recalled to an assessment clinic for more tests which will include:

- a breast examination
- more X-rays or ultrasound scans

You may also have a biopsy, where a small sample of tissue is taken from the breast with a needle.

Sometimes breast screening can pick up cancers that would never have caused harm, so people are treated for breast cancer that would never have been life-threatening.

Reducing your risk

Screening reduces the number of deaths from breast cancer by finding signs of disease at an early stage.

It is important to know what is normal for your body. If you notice any changes report them to your GP.