**Breast screening**

Who will be invited?

Anyone registered as female with a GP will be invited for their first screening mammogram between the ages of 50 and 53. You will then be invited every three years until you reach 71.

We invite you for screening according to which GP surgery you are registered with so you will receive an invitation by post when we are visiting your GP. This means your first screening may be at a different time/age than someone else.

Where will the appointment be?

We have a permanent base in the Forrest Centre at Northampton General Hospital, as well as two mobile units that move around West Northamptonshire. Our mobile units visit Northampton, Brackley, Daventry, Towcester, Roade, Guilsborough.

You will be offered an appointment at the site closest to your GP surgery but if this is inconvenient, please let us know and we can discuss options with you.

The access to the mobile units is via 9 steep steps, so if you struggle with steps you may prefer to have your appointment at the Forrest Centre which is all on one level. We do offer appointments on the mobile units to those with extra accessibility needs but unfortunately due to fire safety, if you are unable to transfer to an evacuation chair in an emergency, we will be unable to offer you an appointment on the mobile units.

[photo of Forrest Centre and mobile units]

What will happen?

When you arrive, you will be asked some questions including when your last mammogram was, and where it was. Please have this information to hand when you attend your appointment, especially if it wasn’t through Northampton Breast Screening.

You’ll then be asked by one of our female mammographers to remove all clothing from the waist upwards, including your bra.

The mammographer will guide you into the correct position.

Once you are in the correct position, the mammographer will apply compression. This is uncomfortable but most people do not find it painful. If you do, please let us know.

Usually four images are taken – two on each breast – although some people may require more. If you do require more, it does not mean anything is wrong.

The whole appointment will take around 10 minutes.

The positioning does require you to raise your arms and have good balance. Please make us aware if you struggle with either of these things so we can adapt to you. We also need to know if you have pacemakers or breast implants.

When will I get my results?

You will receive your results through the post within 2-3 weeks. If you do not receive a letter, please let us know.

Most people will receive a letter informing them that there are no concerns and to re-attend for breast screening in 3 years.

Some people will be asked to come back for further investigations.

Very occasionally the images may not be of sufficient quality so we may ask you to re-attend to repeat one or more images.

Frequently asked questions

**How to change my appointment?**

If you need to change or cancel your appointment, please let us know as soon as you can by calling us on 01604 545285.

**I’ve had a recent mammogram, can I still come for my screening?**

Unfortunately we can not offer you breast screening if you have had a mammogram in the past 6 months. This includes if you went for symptomatic imaging (referred through your GP) or had imaging at a different centre.

**I have moved area, when will I receive my next screening?**

We send invitations by GP surgery. Therefore you will next receive an invitation for breast screening when we are visiting your GP. This might not be 3 years from when you were last invited if you have changed GP surgery. If you have any questions regarding this, please call us on 01604 545285 and we can tell you your options.

**What should I do if I notice a lump?**

Breast screening is only for non-symptomatic imaging. If you have noticed a lump, or any other symptoms, please make an appointment with your GP who will refer you on the symptomatic pathway. This is a different service that gives results on the same day. For more information regarding this, please see the symptomatic section of our website.

**Can I have a mammogram with breast implants?**

Yes you can have a mammogram with implants but we do have to do extra images to visualise the most breast tissue. Please make us aware if you do have breast implants. Find more information here.

**Can I have a mammogram with a pacemaker?**

Yes you can have a mammogram with a pacemaker but due to the intricate wiring, we do not compress that area. Please make us aware if you do have a pacemaker so we can image you appropriately.

**What should I wear?**

You can wear whatever you find most comfortable but we do need you to remove all clothing from the waist up so we advise that you avoid wearing a dress unless you can pull it down. It is beneficial to bring a hair bobble to tie back long hair if required.

**Do I have to remove my jewellery?**

No we do not need you to remove any watches or jewellery.

**Who will take my mammogram?**

A female mammographer will take your mammogram. There are no male mammographers. As we are a teaching hospital, sometimes we will have trainees but they will always practice under relevant supervision. Please let us know if you would rather not have a trainee.

**Can I have screening more regularly?**

Some people may be eligible for more regular screening, for example if you have a recent breast cancer diagnosis, had radiotherapy for Hodgkin’s Lymphoma or have a family history. If you are worried, please discuss with your GP who can advise if you are eligible for more regular screening and complete a referral if required.

**Where can I find more information?**

Please see below some links for further information.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-screening-mammogram/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breast-screening-helping-women-decide/nhs-breast-screening-helping-you-decide>