

# St Vincent's Northside Breast Health Centre

screening • diagnostics • onsite specialists

## Breast screening information

At St Vincent's Northside Breast Health Centre, we are dedicated to providing innovative and comprehensive breast services. We deliver excellence in care and are guided by clinical best practice.

### Breast screening (mammography)

Breast screening is the process used to detect breast cancers before symptoms can develop. We use 3D tomosynthesis mammogram, which uses low dose x-rays to image the breast tissue. This is the best imaging test to check your breasts for cancer.

Some compression is applied when breast screening. This gives the best image using the lowest possible x-ray dose. Two views are taken from different angles. Where possible comparison is made from previous images to best detect any changes. On occasion extra views may be taken to obtain more detail. It is important to remember that not all abnormalities can be seen on mammogram and at times, we recommend use of breast ultrasound to complement mammography.

### Breast ultrasound

Breast ultrasound is an imaging tool that uses high-resolution soundwaves to assess breast tissue. There is little or no discomfort involved in this procedure. A breast ultrasound may be used to complement a mammogram or it may be used when mammography is not appropriate.

We recommend an ultrasound as well as a mammogram in women who have dense breast tissue, an increased risk of developing breast cancer (including those with a strong family history of breast cancer) or a personal history of previous breast cancer. We perform breast ultrasounds on women who have not had breast imaging previously. It provides a good baseline for future imaging. It is also used as the first imaging tool for breastfeeding or pregnant women.

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## Breast density

Breast density is the term used to describe how breasts look on a mammogram. Breast density cannot be determined by a physical breast examination. The amount and thickness of normal breast tissue varies between women. Dense tissue can make detecting abnormalities difficult on mammogram. Factors that influence breast density include genetic factors, hormonal and reproductive factors and age. Research shows breast density can be a risk factor for breast cancer.

## Breast examination

A personal clinical history check and physical breast examination form part of the breast screening process. Physical breast examination is an important adjunct to mammography, as some breast disease may not appear on any imaging. You will have opportunity to discuss your breast health with the Breast Health Nurse.

## Biopsy

You may require a biopsy or fine needle aspiration to further investigate any symptoms or abnormality. You will be provided with information prior to any procedure undertaken.

**If there is a possibility that you may be pregnant, please let a member of staff know before you proceed.**

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**ST VINCENT'S  
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**  
NORTHSIDE

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