

Breast cancer risk assessment: near population risk

This leaflet is for women with near population risk of breast cancer (following a family history risk assessment). The information has been produced by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and the East Kent Hospitals' Breast Cancer Nurse Specialists

If you have any queries, please contact the:

Breast Cancer Risk Assessment Service

Telephone: 01227 86 86 66

Email: ekh-tr.breastfamilyhistory@nhs.net

What is near population risk of breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a common disease. In the general population about one in eight women in the UK will develop breast cancer. Near population risk of breast cancer means that your risk of developing breast cancer is estimated to be similar to other women in the general population.



Although breast cancer is common, having an inherited tendency to developing breast cancer is quite rare. Only about 5 to 10% of all breast cancers happen because of an inherited tendency (also called a genetic predisposition).

Women with near population risk of developing breast cancer are unlikely to have an inherited tendency to develop breast cancer.



Do women with a near population risk of breast cancer need screening?

Yes. Screening for women with a family history of breast cancer is based on nationally recommended guidelines. These can be found on the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence website www.nice.org.uk

You will be offered a mammogram every three years from **50 to 70 years of age** as part of the National Breast Screening Programme. This programme is being extended to invite women in their late 40s and up to 73 years. Women **over 70** can request that breast screening continues every three years if they wish.

For more information, please ask a member of staff for a copy of the **NHS breast screening: helping you decide** leaflet.

You do not need a mammogram more often because:

- breast cancer is easier to see on a mammogram after the menopause
- if breast cancer does occur, it is likely to grow more slowly in women aged 50 or over
- breast tissue in young women can be too 'dense' (tightly packed) for a mammogram to be helpful, when there is no increased risk of breast cancer.

All women are encouraged to be breast aware. Contact your GP if you notice any changes in your breasts. Please do not wait until your next mammogram.

Can anything alter breast cancer risk?

Yes, the following can alter the risk.

- The oral contraceptive pill and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) slightly increase the risk of breast cancer while a woman is taking it, and for up to five years after it is stopped.
- Alcohol increases the risk of breast cancer.
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding lower the risk of breast cancer.
- Being overweight increases the risk of breast cancer for women after the menopause.
- Regular exercise lowers the risk of breast cancer.
- Eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and lowering cholesterol intake helps lower the risk of cancer.
- If anyone else in your family develops cancer, particularly breast or ovarian cancer, then this could alter your risk. If this happens, please ask for a reassessment of your risk.

Useful contacts

- **Breast Cancer Now**
Telephone: 0808 800 6000
Web: breastcancernow.org/
- **Macmillan Cancer Support**
Telephone: 0808 800 0000
Web: www.macmillan.org.uk

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation