Screening Program for Breast Cancer

Saskatchewan Society of Medical Laboratory Technologists
Fall Conference
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Pearl Mah-Vuong, CHIM
Early Detection Coordinator
Screening Program for Breast Cancer
What is a screening vs diagnostics mammogram?

- Screening mammograms are used in women who have no signs or symptoms of breast cancer. Done at a screening location and a physician referral is not required.
- Diagnostic mammograms are used in women who have signs or symptoms of breast cancer. Done at a diagnostic centre and a physician referral is required.
What is the main goal of our program?

- The main goal of our program is to decrease deaths from breast cancer by discovering the cancer early before there are any signs or symptoms.
Who should be screened?

- All women 50 or older
- Saskatchewan women with a valid health card
Who should not be screened?

Women who:

- Have acute breast symptoms
- Have breast implants
- Are on active follow-up for breast cancer
Where can you be screened?

- Regina and Saskatoon
- Six satellite sites:
  - Yorkton
  - Moose Jaw
  - Swift Current
  - North Battleford
  - Prince Albert
  - Lloydminster
- Mobile – serves rural and remote areas
SPBC Mobile Bus
Inside the bus
When will the mobile be back in your community?

- We visit sites on an odd/even year basis.
What do you need to know?

- In Saskatchewan we screen women 50 years and older
- Women will receive their first invite letter the year they turn 50
- Optional program and no referral from a physician required
What do you need to know?

- If a woman has a normal mammogram then both her and her physician will receive a letter from us.
- If a woman has an abnormal screen then she will be contacted by either her physician, nurse practitioner or one of our client navigators.
What do you need to know?

- Client navigators arrange follow-up tests
- Client navigators provides information and support to women with abnormal results
How often should you be screened?

- No family history – every 2 years
- Family history – every year (first degree relative – mother, sister or daughter)
- Breast density > 75% - every year
Why participate?

- As you may or may not know breast cancer is the most common type of cancer and second leading cause of death among Canadian women.

- This year in Saskatchewan it is estimated that 700 women will be diagnosed and 160 will die of breast cancer.

- It can occur at any age but approximately half of the new cases do occur in women between the ages of 50-69.

- Early detection combined with effective treatment remains the best option available to continue reducing deaths from breast cancer in this age group.
What you will get in the mail?

Dear

Welcome to the Screening Program for Breast Cancer (SPBC). The SPBC is a provincial health program that provides screening mammograms to Saskatchewan women starting at age 50. The SPBC reminds women to have regular mammograms, provides them with their results, and offers support if further tests are needed.

One in 9 Saskatchewan women will develop breast cancer. Mammography is the safest and most reliable method of detecting breast cancer early. Early detection means more treatment options and better health outcomes.

Women 50 years of age and over should have a screening mammogram once every two years. If you have had a previous mammogram, your complete file can be transferred to the program. You do not need a doctor's referral to make an appointment, and you can choose a time and location that is convenient for you.

The SPBC operates two permanent screening centres in Regina and Saskatoon; satellite centres in Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Yorkton, North Battleford, Prince Albert and Lloydminster; and a mobile bus that travels throughout rural and northern Saskatchewan.

To make an appointment, please call toll-free 1-855-584-8228.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact our program and ask to speak to a client navigator. Client navigators coordinate follow up tests and provide breast health information as part of the SPBC breast health team. Having regular mammograms is an important part of women’s health. We look forward to your participation in this health program for women.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Chavis, MD, FCIP, MSc (Public Health)
Medical Advisor, Population Health
Saskatchewan Cancer Agency
Two weeks later another letter...

Dear,

The Screening Program for Breast Cancer (SPBC) is a provincial health program dedicated to finding breast cancer early. The SPBC reminds women to have regular mammograms, provides results and offers support if further tests are needed.

Our records indicate that you are due for your next mammogram.

Women 50 years of age and over, without a family history of breast cancer, should have a mammogram every two years. Screening programs are proven effective in the early detection of breast cancer when women attend on a regular basis.

Please call now to make an appointment. You do not need a doctor's referral to make an appointment, and you can choose a time and location that is convenient for you.

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Sincerely,

Dr. Brenda Chelin, MD, FCFP, MSc (Public Health)  
Medical Advisor, Population Health  
Saskatchewan Cancer Agency
Mammography (x-ray) machine
Woman having a screening mammogram
What happens during a screening mammogram?
Does a mammogram hurt?

- Most women find that it does not hurt
- Some find it uncomfortable
- A few find it painful
Why is compression necessary?

- It is needed to flatten the breast tissue to make it easier to see the tissue inside the breast and helps to provide a clear image of the breast tissue.
Images will be “Read” by a Radiologist
What will happen if you have a normal result?

- Results will be mailed to the client and her physician.
- The client will be screened again in two years, annually if they have a family history or dense breasts.
Dear,

Thank you for participating in the Screening Program for Breast Cancer. This letter is to inform you that no signs of malignancy were detected on your screening mammogram.

Although mammograms are very successful in finding small cancers, they are not 100% certain. Therefore, we encourage you to become familiar with your breast tissues and report any change to your care provider. Continue to have your care provider examine your breasts during your check-ups. Breast self-examination is still an excellent way to notice changes between check-ups and mammograms. Please contact your doctor if you notice any changes.

The Screening Program provides mammograms to women yearly if they have a family history of breast cancer and every two years if they do not have a history. You will be contacted and reminded to make an appointment when it is time for your next mammogram. Remember, it is important to have screening mammograms at regular intervals.

If you have any questions about the Screening Program for Breast Cancer, or your mammogram, please call us toll-free at 1-855-584-8228.

We look forward to your continued participation in this important health program for women.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Ching-Hua Lunn, MD FRCP
Medical Advisor, Screening Program for Breast Cancer
Saskatchewan Cancer Agency
What will happen if you have an abnormal result?

- The client will receive a phone call either from her doctor, her nurse practitioner or our client navigator.
- Our client navigator will arrange the follow-up tests required.
Dear [Patient Name],

Thank you for participating in the Screening Program for Breast Cancer. The radiologist who examined your screening mammogram recommended that you have further tests. These tests may consist of additional mammograms and/or an ultrasound. Please do not be overly concerned about the need for additional tests as approximately 92% of women referred for additional tests do not have cancer.

We have sent a copy of the radiologist’s report to your family doctor. Please make an appointment with your family doctor for a breast examination and to arrange for the additional tests.

I do not want you to be too concerned about the request for further tests, however, I do want you to contact your doctor. If you would like more information, please call the Screening Program for Breast cancer toll-free at 1-855-584-8228.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Cheng-Hua Lim, MD FRCPC
Medical Advisor, Screening Program for Breast Cancer
Saskatchewan Cancer Agency
How to book your screening mammogram?

- Call 1-855-584-8228
- Reminder this service is free with a valid Saskatchewan Health Card

For more information you can visit our website:
www.saskcancer.ca
Questions