

SENDER
ADDRESS
POST CODE AND CITY

RECIPIENT
ADDRESS
POST CODE AND CITY

Place of screening

Name
Street address
City
Website

Your appointment

Date time

User ID

Invitation to breast cancer screening 2010

The municipality where you live is this year offering you a screening test for breast cancer. Screening is conducted in the form of a mammogram, i.e. an X-ray examination of the breasts. An invitation to this screening test is sent to all women aged 50–69 every two years. Participation in the screening is voluntary.

Screening is carried out in order to detect symptom-free breast cancer at the earliest possible stage. This ensures better treatment results for breast cancer and reduces breast cancer mortality. During mammography, images from two different directions are taken of both breasts. The bare breast is compressed against the imaging unit, and while compression may feel uncomfortable, it only lasts for a few seconds for each image. The appointment will take about half an hour in total.

- ***If you have previous mammograms at home, please bring the most recent images with you.***
- ***At your appointment, we will ask you questions related to any changes in your breasts, breast surgery, breast cancer and hormone replacement therapy.***
- ***Breast cancer screening is free of charge for you.***

You will receive the results by mail within three weeks of your appointment. If any areas of concern are found in your test, you will receive a letter or phone call, asking you to return for further tests (e.g. an additional mammography test, ultrasound and a needle biopsy).

Your appointment for a screening test is at Name of the place. For more information, please phone 00 0000 000. You may change or cancel your pre-booked appointment online at XXXXXXXXXXXX or by tel. 00 000. If you are changing your appointment online, your user ID is on the upper right of this invitation letter and your password is your full personal identity number.

More information on breast cancer screening is available on the website of the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) at www.thl.fi/seulonnat (in Finnish).

Please turn over

More information about breast cancer screening

Breast cancer screening has advantages and drawbacks, and individual people respond to these in different ways. It is a good idea to consider the advantages and disadvantages before you make up your mind about whether you want to have a screening test done or not.

Screening prevents breast cancer deaths

Screening is believed to prevent one breast cancer death per 6000 women screened per year. Thus screening prevents about 50 deaths from breast cancer in Finland every year.

Screening tests generally enable early detection of breast cancer. If breast cancer is detected early, there is a greater chance of breast-conserving types of surgery. However, there is no guarantee that all breast cancers that are detected early can actually be cured.

Screening may have harmful effects

Mammograms may show changes; in further testing these are often found to be benign. However, further testing and the waiting for results can in themselves cause unnecessary anxiety and inconvenience.

Some of the cancers detected in screening are of a type that might never require treatment. However, all cancers found are treated, because it is impossible to tell in advance which ones will continue to grow.

Screening cannot find all cases of cancer. Despite a normal screening result, a woman might develop cancer before the next screening. The risk is higher for women with dense breast tissue and women on hormone replacement therapy. Even if your screening results are normal, it is a good idea to stay alert and check your breasts.

If you are asked back for further tests, it does not mean you have cancer

Some 2% of all the women screened are asked back for further tests. Usually this means a second mammogram and an ultrasound examination, and in many cases also a needle biopsy. The results of further tests are generally benign. After further tests, one in three patients is referred for surgical treatment (about 1500 women a year). However, not all of them have breast cancer.

The decision is yours

You are completely free to decide for yourself whether you want to participate in screening or not. Either decision may be justifiable for you. If you decide not to have a mammogram this year, you will still receive an invitation to screening two years from now.