

**BreastScreen NSW
Breast Screening Campaign 2009
Cherry and Pea Television Commercial
Backgrounder and Frequently Asked Questions**

BACKGROUND

Breast Cancer and Screening Mammograms

Breast cancer is the most common cancer affecting women in NSW. This year alone, about 4200 women will develop breast cancer in NSW. Approximately one in nine women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. Being female and age are the biggest risk factors in developing the disease, with over 75% of breast cancers occurring in women over 50 years.¹



Breast cancer ranks equally with lung cancer as one of the two leading causes of cancer death amongst NSW women, claiming the lives of more than 900 NSW women each year. In the decade from 1997 to 2006 the age-standardised mortality rates for breast cancer fell by 13.8%. Improved treatment and population screening have contributed to the fall in mortality from breast cancer.²

Early detection of breast cancer before it has a chance to spread is the most important factor determining the survival and recovery of a woman from the disease. Regular screening mammograms among women aged 50 -69 years increases the likelihood that breast cancers are found as early as possible.

BreastScreen NSW is managed by the Cancer Institute NSW and is part of BreastScreen Australia, a joint Commonwealth and state/territory program. It offers free screening mammograms for women aged over 40 years. The primary target age group is women aged 50-69 years because they are at an increased risk of breast cancer and screening mammography is most effective among this group.³ Therefore the Cancer Institute NSW is committed to increasing the participation of target age group women in the BreastScreen NSW Program.

Cherry and Pea Television Commercial

The Cancer Institute NSW has launched a new breast screening campaign to encourage women aged 50-69 years to have a screening mammogram every two years. The *Cherry and Pea* television commercial was developed in 2006 to provide information about the importance of having a screening mammogram and detecting breast cancer early. The commercial compares the size of a breast cancer detected by physical examination (represented by a cherry) and that of a breast cancer detected by a screening mammogram (represented by a pea).

Cherry and Pea successfully raised awareness of the importance of early detection through breast cancer screening and the BreastScreen NSW service. However, evaluation of the previous campaign found that women desired a clearer message which communicates the benefits of screening and early detection, particularly in

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terms of survival. The script was revised to strengthen and clarify the messages in the commercial.

The revised *Cherry and Pea* commercial was tested in February 2009 among women in the target age group. Over half the women recognised the commercial despite it not being on air for nearly two years. The results found that 68% of women stated the commercial “makes me more likely to call BreastScreen NSW for an appointment” and 86% stated it “makes me more aware of why I should have a mammogram every two years”. Importantly, the revised version clarified the message communicated in the commercial. The research also revealed that *Cherry and Pea* complements the newly developed *Take You Away* commercial, warranting airing both commercials during the 2009 Breast Screening Campaign.

The Campaign begins on 26 April 2009 and will run through to June across NSW and ACT television and radio. It includes 45 second and 15 second versions of *Take You Away* as well as a 30 second version of the *Cherry and Pea* television and radio commercials previously aired in 2006 and 2007.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1) Who has developed this campaign and how is it funded?
The campaign was developed by the Cancer Institute NSW and Breast Screen NSW. The Cancer Institute NSW incorporates BreastScreen NSW, a joint Commonwealth and state/territory. The combined cost to develop and implement *Cherry and Pea* and *Take You Away* was \$1.5 million.
- 2) What is the reason for the Campaign?
BreastScreen NSW plays an important role in detecting breast cancer in the early stages for women in NSW. The Program aims to screen 70% of women aged 50-69 years in NSW. Mass media campaigns have proven to be an effective means of increasing participation in screening programs.
- 3) Why is early detection vital?
Breast cancer is the most common cause of death from cancer in Australian women and approximately one in nine Australian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime.

The chances of developing breast cancer increases as women get older. Early detection of breast cancer while it is small and before it has a chance to spread is the most important factor determining the survival and recovery of a woman from the disease. There is a 97% chance of survival five years post-diagnosis if breast cancer is detected early. Regular screening mammograms increase the likelihood that breast cancers are found as early as possible.

A screening mammogram can find cancers when they are as small as a pea. Without screening mammograms, cancers are more likely to be noticed or felt when they are much larger – at around the size of a small cherry.

- 4) Why are screening mammograms recommended every two years?
Breast cancer can develop at any time. About one in nine women in NSW develop breast cancer at some time in their lives. Research has shown that screening for breast cancer can reduce the number of deaths from the disease in the target age group of women 50 to 69 years.
A screening mammogram can detect breast cancer at an early stage. Generally, the earlier breast cancer is detected, the greater the treatment

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options available to a woman. Regular screening increases the likelihood that breast cancers are found as early as possible. A two-year screening interval is recommended as there is evidence that screening intervals of longer than two years will reduce the mortality benefit from screening.

It is a woman's choice to have a screening mammogram; however routine screening is important so that if breast cancer has developed since a previous screen, it will still be detected early.

- 5) Why does BreastScreen NSW target asymptomatic women aged 50-69 years?

Screening is the process of looking for disease in a population of healthy people who have no symptoms of disease. A mammogram is an x-ray picture that enables doctors to see inside the breast. So a screening mammogram is a breast x-ray of women with no symptoms of breast cancer.

Mammograms are usually more accurate as women get older, as the breast tissue becomes less dense. BreastScreen NSW targets asymptomatic women aged 50 to 69 years as a priority since screening mammograms have been shown to be of most benefit, in terms of deaths prevented, for women in this age group. However all women older than 40 years are eligible for free screening mammograms.

- 6) Does a woman need a doctor's referral to go to BreastScreen?

A doctor's referral is not required to make an appointment at BreastScreen NSW. A booking for any BreastScreen NSW site can be made by calling 13 20 50. However women are encouraged to contact their doctor if they have any concerns or queries, or if they notice any changes in their breasts.

- 7) Can women 40-49 years, make an appointment?

Yes. The current BreastScreen Australia policy about screening women aged 40 to 49 years states that:

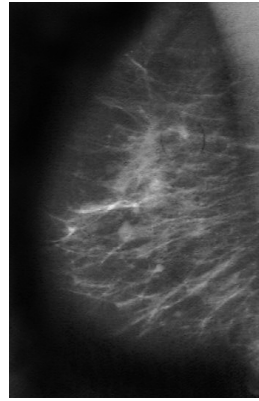
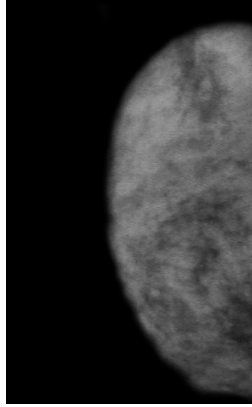
Mammography screening through BreastScreen Australia is available to women aged 40 to 49 years who have decided, based on current knowledge and personal choice that they wish to attend. However there is clear evidence that screening has the greatest population benefit for women aged 50 to 69 years to prevent deaths from breast cancer.

- 8) Can women 70+, make an appointment?

Yes. Women aged 70 years and older are eligible and welcome to attend BreastScreen NSW. We advise women in this age group to discuss the requirement for ongoing screening mammograms with their GP so they make an informed decision. One reason being they may have competing health priorities.

- 9) What can women under 40 years do to be aware of breast cancer?

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BreastScreen NSW encourages all women to be aware of the normal look and feel of their breasts. Getting to know what is normal will help a woman recognise new or unusual breast changes. If a woman notices any new or unusual changes in her breast, she should see her doctor as soon as possible.

Regular screening mammograms are not recommended for women under 40 years of age. The tissue of young women's breasts tends to be denser than that of older women. This is due to the influence of hormones. On a mammogram, dense breast tissue shows up as a white area. Breast cancers also appear white and are therefore more difficult to find on younger women's mammograms.

Mammograms are usually more accurate as women get older, as the breast tissue becomes less dense and breast cancers are easier to see against a darker background.

10) What should women with a family history of breast cancer do?

BreastScreen NSW recommends that women with a strong family history of breast cancer discuss their circumstances with their general practitioner.

¹ Tracey E, Alam N, Chen W, Bishop J. *Cancer in New South Wales: Incidence and Mortality 2006*. Sydney: Cancer Institute NSW, November 2008.

² Tracey E et al, 2008.

³ National Quality Management Committee of BreastScreen Australia, BreastScreen Australia National Accreditation Standards, November 2004.

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