

Breast Cancer

What is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer happens when some cells in the breast grow the wrong way.

These cells can form a lump called a tumour. If not treated, cancer can spread to other parts of the body.

What causes Breast Cancer?

There are some things that can make breast cancer more likely:

- Being a woman.
- Getting older.

- Having dense (thick) breasts.
- Getting your first period early (before age 12).
Reaching menopause (stopping periods) after age 55.
- Using hormone therapy or the pill for a long time.
- Having other health problems with your breasts.

Does family history matter?

Yes. If close family members like your mum, aunty, or sister have had breast cancer, you might have a higher chance of getting it too.

This can be because:

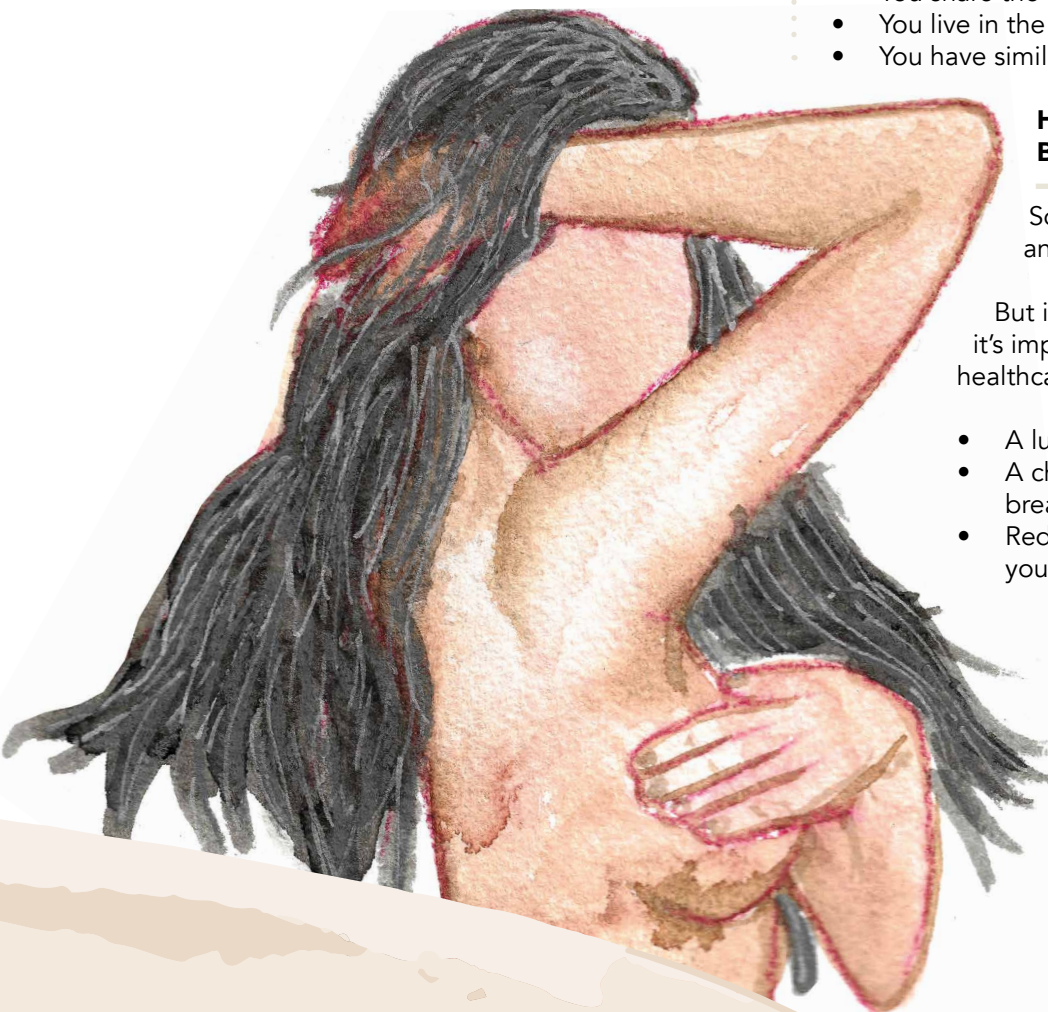
- You share the same genes.
- You live in the same places.
- You have similar lifestyles.

How do I feel / How do I look with Breast Cancer?

Sometimes, you might not feel or see anything different.

But if you notice any of these changes, it's important to yarn with your doctor or healthcare worker:

- A lump in your breast or armpit.
- A change in the size or shape of your breast.
- Redness, dimpling, or thickened skin on your breast.
 - Nipple changes, like fluid leaking, redness, or the nipple turning inward.
 - Pain in your breast that doesn't go away.



Breast cancer remains the most common cancer diagnosis for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

RACGP National Guide to Preventative Health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People 4th Edition



How does the doctor know I have Breast Cancer?

If you're worried, your doctor will:

- Check your breasts and armpits for lumps.
- Send you for tests like:
 - A mammogram (a special x-ray of the breasts).
 - An ultrasound (a scan using soundwaves to make pictures).
 - A biopsy (taking a small bit of breast tissue to test in a lab).

How can we treat Breast Cancer?

A specialised healthcare team will work with you to decide the best treatment after your diagnosis.

Some common treatments are:

- Surgery: Removing the cancer. Sometimes, the whole breast may need to be removed.
- Chemotherapy: Medicine to stop the cancer from growing and spreading.
- Radiation Therapy: Using x-rays to clear away any leftover cancer cells.
- Hormone Therapy: Medicine to slow down or stop the cancer if it uses hormones to grow.

How can we reduce the risk of Breast Cancer?

Some ways to lower the risk can include:

- Breastfeeding your baby.
- Staying at a healthy weight.
- Being active.
- Not smoking.
- Limiting alcohol.

Looking after yourself and your community

It's important to look out for each other and support the women in your community to stay strong and healthy.

- Yarn with other women about breast cancer.
- Encourage each other to see a doctor if you notice anything different.
- Get regular check-ups and mammograms if your doctor recommends them.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 40-74 are encouraged to have a free mammogram every two years.



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