

## Your cancer screening checklist



Early detection can make all the difference when it comes to cancer. These are some key things to be aware of.

### Cancer screening programs

The Australian government runs three population-level screening programs for common cancers.



#### Bowel cancer

**Cases per year:** 15,540

**Who?** People aged between 50 & 74

**What?** Free at-home screening test via the mail

**When?** Every two years

**Program participation rate:**  
41.6 percent

**Learn more:** [health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-bowel-cancer-screening-program](https://health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-bowel-cancer-screening-program)



#### Breast cancer

**Cases per year:** 20,030

**Who?** Women and people with breasts aged between 50 and 74; those over 40 may also choose to be screened

**What?** Free mammogram at BreastScreen Australia

**When?** Every two years

**Program participation rate:**  
48 percent

**Learn more:** [health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/breastscreen-australia-program](https://health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/breastscreen-australia-program)



#### Cervical cancer

**Cases per year:** 913

**Who?** Women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 74

**What?** Self-collection swab or a Cervical Screening Test conducted by your healthcare provider

**When?** Every five years

**Program participation rate:**  
62 percent (estimate)

**Learn more:** [health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-cervical-screening-program](https://health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-cervical-screening-program)

## Changes to watch out for

It's important to see your doctor if you notice any unusual changes in your body. According to the Cancer Council Victoria, these can include:

- Changes in toilet habits that last more than two weeks
- Blood in a bowel motion
- A cough or hoarseness that doesn't go away
- Coughing up blood
- Lumpiness or unusual changes, pain or discharge in your breast
- A lump in your neck, armpit or anywhere else on your body
- Sores or ulcers that don't heal
- New moles or skin spots
- Moles or skin spots that have changed shape, size or colour, or that bleed
- Unusual vaginal discharge or bleeding
- Unexplained weight loss

These are just some suggestions for things to look out for. If you ever see something unusual, we recommend you talk to your healthcare professional.

## Questions to ask about your cancer screening

It's important to talk to your healthcare professional if you're worried about cancer or think you might need screening (if you have a family history of cancer, for example). While every situation is different, these questions could act as a starting point for a discussion about screening.

- Do I potentially have an increased risk of cancer?
- Are there any cancer screening tests that I should consider?
- What information will the test provide?
- What does the test involve?
- What are the benefits and risks in having the test?
- How often do I need to have the test done?
- How much will the test cost?
- How do I book in for the test? Is there a waiting period?
- Do I need to do anything to prepare for the test?
- How will I find out the results of the test?
- What happens if the test results aren't normal?



### For more information

[australianunity.com.au/wellbeing](https://australianunity.com.au/wellbeing)

#### Disclaimer

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