

Peri- and postmenopausal screening and tests:

Breast and cervical cancer screening

Screening programmes for cervical cancer and breast cancer (including more focused screening for familial breast cancer) vary worldwide, with different recommendations regarding the age at which screening is started and stopped and regarding the screening interval.

Breast cancer screening of women at average risk

- This is usually undertaken with mammography
- The frequency varies, from annually to every 3 years
- It is offered to women aged 40–74 years
- More frequent mammography is not recommended for users of **menopausal hormone therapy** (MHT)
- There is no need to stop MHT before mammography to reduce recall rates

Breast cancer screening of women at increased risk

Programs vary worldwide. Risk factors include:

- A pedigree suggestive of or a known genetic predisposition (e.g. *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* inherited gene mutation)
- Previous radiation therapy with exposure of breast tissue between the ages of 10 and 30 years

- Atypical ductal hyperplasia
- Lobular neoplasia
- Personal history of breast cancer
- Dense breast tissue on mammography

Cervical cancer screening

- This involves testing for the human papillomavirus virus (HPV) and cytology (Pap smear)
- The frequency varies between every 3 to 5 years
- It is offered to women aged 25–65 years
- More frequent screening is not recommended for **MHT users**
- Clinical practice guidelines and screening programs may be modified by **HPV vaccination**
- Current screening programs include both vaccinated and unvaccinated women

Further information

American Cancer Society (2025). Guidelines for the early detection of cancer <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/screening/american-cancer-society-guidelines-for-the-early-detection-of-cancer.html>

NICE (2023). Guideline CG164. Familial breast cancer: classification, care and managing breast cancer and related risks in people with a family history of breast cancer <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg164>

US National Comprehensive Cancer Network (2025). NCCN Guidelines®. Breast cancer screening and diagnosis, version 2.2025 https://www.nccn.org/professionals/physician_gls/pdf/breast-screening.pdf

WHO (2025). Cervical cancer <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cervical-cancer>