

Doctors' Voice

November – December 2014

BreastScreen Victoria

Breast health awareness is important for all women. Being aware of the normal look and feel of your breasts can help you to detect anything unusual that may need to be checked by a doctor. 75% of breast cancers are detected in women aged over 50.

Breast changes to look for:

- A lump, lumpiness or thickening in the breast or armpit – especially if it is in one breast only
- A change in the size or shape of your breast
- Skin changes such as dimpling or redness
- Nipple inversion or discharge
- A change to the nipple, like a rash, ulcer or itchiness
- An unusual or persistent pain

Who is eligible to access the BreastScreen Victoria program?

Women aged 50-74 years: Breast screening is primarily recommended for this age group, as they will obtain the greatest benefit from screening. BreastScreen Victoria provides free breast screens every two years for the early detection of breast cancer.

Women aged between 40 – 49 years: are also eligible to have free breast screens with BreastScreen Victoria every two years, however the breast tissue of women in this age group is more dense than older women and can show up as white areas on the x-ray, making breast cancer detection more difficult. We encourage women in this age group to discuss screening with their GP.

Women aged under 40 years: have dense breast tissue which makes it difficult for breast screens to accurately detect breast cancer. Therefore, women in this age group are not eligible to attend BreastScreen Victoria. Women should consult their doctor if they have any breast symptoms.

Women aged 74 years+: Women in this age group are still at risk of breast cancer. If aged over 74, they are outside BreastScreen's target age range for screening and won't receive letters from BreastScreen Victoria, however they are still eligible to have a free breast screening mammogram every two years. As health needs become more complex as we age, all women in this age group should discuss screening with their GP.

There are 3 good reasons to have a breast screen. It's FREE and EASY and you don't need a referral!

Source: BreastScreen Victoria www.breastscreen.org.au

Booking an appointment at BreastScreen is easy

BreastScreen Victoria's office in Geelong is located at:
78 Gheringhap St, Geelong 3220

Making a booking is easy:

1. Visit www.breastscreen.org.au to register your details
2. Book an appointment
3. Receive email confirmation
4. Or call 13 20 50



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Christmas – tips to reduce the stress



Christmas can be a stressful time. The expense of buying gifts, the pressure of last minute shopping and the heightened expectations of family togetherness can all combine to undermine our best intentions. Some practical suggestions to help you reduce your 'Christmas stress'.

- **Budgeting for Christmas** – plan ahead to avoid a massive credit card bill that can take months to clear. Work out a rough budget of expected costs and start saving as early as possible.
- **Presents** – it can become very costly to buy presents for a large circle of extended family or friends. Consider altering the way your family and friends give presents. Alternatives include: Purchase only for the children; Enter into a family 'Kris Kringle' and purchase only for one person; Set a limit on the cost of gifts for each other.
- **Christmas shopping** – plan your shopping expedition and make a list of gifts you wish to purchase. To avoid duplication cross names off your list as you buy. Avoid crowds-shop early!
- **Food preparation** – preparing the meal can be enjoyable, but tiring and stressful. Don't forget to delegate tasks. You don't need to do everything yourself. Consider a buffet style meal where everybody brings a platter or why not dine at a restaurant (but you will need to book well ahead!)

Partying Safely – some tips to remember



Parties are fun for people of all ages, and this time of year sees an increase in social gatherings. Tips for safe partying include:

- **Alcohol** - is a drug that affects people in different ways and is responsible for most drug-related deaths in the teenage population. Moderation is the key.
- **Drink driving** – there is no golden rule for how many drinks will take you over the legal limit for driving. Nominate a designated driver or share a taxi home with friends.
- **Drink spiking** – slipping alcohol or drugs into a friend's drink as a joke is against the law & may have serious consequences.
- **Safe partying** – don't advertise a party via SMS or the internet to limit the risk of gate-crashers and violent situation.

Physical activity – staying motivated



Sticking to an exercise or physical activity routine can be difficult at this time of year. Pick an activity that appeals to you and suits your budget and lifestyle. Enlist a friend to join you. Motivate each other! Always consult with your doctor before beginning any new exercise program particularly if you are overweight, over 40 years, haven't exercised in a long time or have a chronic medical condition.



Christmas closure and altered opening times

This time of year may attract altered opening times for many health practices. Check with our Reception staff for this practice's operating hours during the Christmas and New Year period.

Do you know that you can find a doctor, dentist or pharmacy by visiting the docgeelong website?

This website has been developed by Barwon Medicare Local to help the local community and visitors find after hours medical services in the region.

Visit www.docgeelong.com

In an emergency, always call triple zero



Shop, store, cook and eat safe



The Department of Health has launched a new animation 'Shop, store, cook and eat safe' that illustrates the importance of food safety in the home.

Food poisoning can be serious for unborn babies, young children, older people, and people with conditions that weaken their immune systems - but there are easy steps we can all take to prevent getting sick.

The animation stars Brian, Bobby, Billy and Bernie bacteria and reminds us of the importance of keeping bacteria away by shopping, storing, cooking and eating safely. It is also available in Arabic, Vietnamese and Simplified Chinese.

Watch 'Shop, store, cook and eat safe' at www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/eat-safe