



Be
Breast
Aware



www.acon.org.au

ACON Lesbian Health Project

9 Commonwealth St, Surry Hills NSW 2010
Sydney 02 9206 2084 • Western Sydney 02 9206 2007
Northern Rivers 02 6622 1555 • Hunter 02 4927 6808
Illawarra 02 4226 1163

© FEB 2006. DESIGN BY MANDARIN CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Let's keep lesbian breasts healthy

ACON Lesbian Health Project



Being lesbian or bisexual doesn't automatically put you at higher risk of breast cancer, nor does it lessen your risk.

Being a woman and growing older is the highest risk factor for breast cancer.

However lesbians as a group may have higher rates of some breast cancer risk factors than their heterosexual peers. Many lesbians haven't had children or have given birth to their first child after 30 and haven't breast fed.

Being overweight and drinking more than two alcoholic drinks a day may also increase the risk.

These factors, along with early commencement of menstruation, and late menopause seem to slightly increase a woman's risk of developing breast cancer.

If you have a strong family history of breast cancer, it is wise to speak with your doctor and work out a monitoring plan.

What can I do to prevent it from happening to me?

There is no known cause or prevention of breast cancer. However, early detection provides the best chance of effective treatment of breast cancer.

How can I detect breast cancer?

- Have an annual breast exam by a health care provider.
- Mammograms are provided by BreastScreen Australia free for women aged 40 and over. Mammograms may not be as accurate for women aged 40-49 because their breasts are denser. You can discuss this with your health care provider and read the information on the websites listed in this brochure to help you decide. Women 70 years and over are also eligible.

All women between 50 and 69 years of age should have a mammogram every two years.

- Get to know your breasts — how they feel and look at different times of the month. If you notice changes such as lumps, pain or discomfort in one breast, swelling, change of shape, rash or discharge see your health care provider.

If in doubt, check it out.

Reduce your risk

- Cut alcohol to two drinks or less a day
- Get moving physically
- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables and reduce animal and saturated fats
- Maintain a healthy body weight

For more information contact

BreastScreen 13 20 50
www.bsnsw.org.au

National Breast Cancer Centre
www.breasthealth.com.au

The Cancer Council NSW
Helpline 13 11 20
www.cancercouncil.com.au

Support for lesbians diagnosed with breast and ovarian cancer

is available through NSW Cancer Council Connect programme. This service links you with a trained lesbian volunteer who has had cancer and undergone similar treatment to you and understands how you might be feeling and the challenges you face. To find out more call 13 11 20.