

Programme québécois
DE DÉPISTAGE DU CANCER DU SEIN

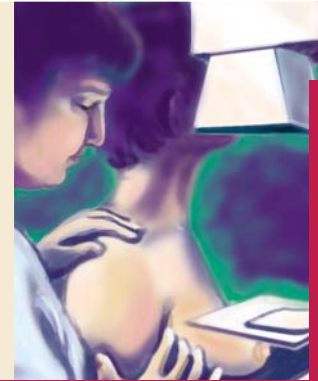
A close-up photograph of a woman's face and hand. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. Her hand is gently touching her breast. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of colors.

It's better
TO ACT
than **TO REACT**

Québec 

BREAST Cancer

ACCORDING TO ESTIMATES FOR 2005, BREAST CANCER IS THE MOST FREQUENTLY DIAGNOSED



FORM OF CANCER AMONG WOMEN IN QUÉBEC

ACCORDING TO ESTIMATES FOR 2005, BREAST CANCER IS THE MOST FREQUENTLY DIAGNOSED FORM OF CANCER AMONG WOMEN IN QUÉBEC. THERE ARE MORE THAN 5,000 NEW CASES OF BREAST CANCER PER YEAR IN QUÉBEC. IN ABOUT 75% OF THE CASES, THE WOMEN AFFECTED ARE OVER 50 YEARS OLD. THE CHANCES OF SURVIVING THIS DISEASE ARE INCREASING ALL THE TIME.

THE CAUSES OF BREAST CANCER ARE NOT YET KNOWN. HOWEVER, WE DO KNOW THAT THE RISK OF A WOMAN HAVING BREAST CANCER INCREASES WITH AGE. THE BEST WAY TO INFLUENCE THE PROGRESSION OF BREAST CANCER IS TO DETECT A TUMOUR AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. THE SMALLER THE TUMOUR, THE BETTER THE CHANCE OF RECOVERY.

The Programme québécois de dépistage du cancer du sein

Currently, mammography is recognized as the best method to detect breast cancer. That is why the government of Québec implemented the Programme québécois de dépistage du cancer du sein (the Québec breast cancer screening program) in 1998. Under this program, all women aged 50 to 69 are invited by letter to have a screening mammogram every two years. Several studies have shown that application of a screening program over several years can reduce breast cancer mortality. Results obtained to date are encouraging and are an incentive to continue these activities.

Mammography

A screening mammogram is an X-ray of the breasts that makes it possible to detect small lesions, some of which cannot be detected by touch. Usually, two X-rays for each breast are required: one taken from above and one from the side. Flattening the breast results in a better image of the inside of the breast and reduces the amount of radiation required. There is virtually no risk of developing cancer because of repeated mammograms.

Some women feel discomfort, even pain, when the breast is flattened. This is soon over with, so there is no need to worry. If your breasts are sensitive, it is preferable to avoid coffee, tea, choco-

late and colas for two weeks before your mammogram is taken. It is also best to have it taken sometime during the 10 days that follow the beginning of your menstrual period or when your breasts are less sensitive.

Under the Québec breast cancer screening program, mammograms must be taken at designated screening centres. They comply with strict standards of quality which increase the chances of detecting small lesions. You must make an appointment at one of these centres located in X-ray clinics or hospitals. Note that screening mammograms performed at designated centres in the Québec breast cancer screening program are free of charge. The list of designated screening centres can be obtained by contacting your doctor or calling the Info-Santé service in your region.

Medical follow-up

Mammography is still the most reliable method of screening for breast cancer, but it does have its limitations. Medical follow-up is therefore essential.

In spite of considerable improvements in equipment and training of staff, it is still to be expected that 5% to 15% of cancers will not be detected through mammography. It is therefore important for women to see their doctors once a year for a clinical breast examination. Between these examinations, any change in the appearance of the breasts - a lump, a redness, a change



in texture or a discharge - should also be reported to the doctor. Any of these signs may indicate a problem, but not necessarily one that is cancer-related.

Also, in some cases, results of a mammogram are judged to be uncertain. Additional examinations may then be necessary. This causes a period of uncertainty but, once again, most of these cases tend not to be related to cancer.

Designated referral centres or centres de référence pour investigation désignés (CRIDs) provide additional examinations free of charge when a screening examination reveals an abnormality. If the screening results are abnormal, some designated private screening centres (CDDs) also offer ultrasound examinations, for which the woman is billed.

On the day of your appointment for the mammogram

On the day of your appointment, bring your health insurance card with you, as well as your letter of invitation or the referral slip from your doctor. You should also have the name and address of your doctor since your mammogram results will be sent to him or her. If you don't have a doctor, somebody at the centre will help you choose a doctor who will follow up your results.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR APPOINTMENT

- *Do not use deodorant, powder, cream or perfume on your breasts or underarms. These products may cause marks on the mammograms.*
- *It is best not to wear a dress. Separates, such as a skirt and blouse, will simplify undressing since you will only have to take off the top.*

TO HAVE YOUR MAMMOGRAM TAKEN

- *You will have to remove all jewellery, including chains and earrings, and other objects that might interfere with the quality of the X-rays.*
- *When you arrive at the screening centre, you will be greeted by a staff member who will invite you to register for the Québec breast cancer screening program by signing the authorization form for the transmission of information. **If you decide not to take part in the program, you will need to ask your doctor for a referral slip in order to obtain a mammogram.***
- *A specialized X-ray technologist will ask you a few questions about your health and will then take the mammogram.*

In the weeks after your mammogram is taken at the designated screening centre, you and your doctor will be informed by letter whether the results of your screening are normal or whether additional examinations are necessary. If you need additional examinations, it does not mean that you have breast cancer. In the vast majority of cases, the additional examinations reveal that the lesions are non cancerous.

The authorization form FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION

RELATED TO PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMME QUÉBÉCOIS DE DÉPISTAGE DU CANCER DU SEIN



AT THE DESIGNATED SCREENING CENTRE,
YOU WILL BE ASKED TO FILL IN AND SIGN
THE AUTHORIZATION FORM FOR THE
TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION.

Here is why.

By authorizing the transmission of
information:

- You will receive a letter informing you of the results of your mammogram;
- You will benefit from a special follow-up if additional examinations are required after having received the results of your screening mammogram;
- You will be reminded by letter every two years when the time comes for your next screening mammogram under the Québec breast cancer screening program;
- You will be taking part in a program that will be evaluated thoroughly, on a regular basis, to ensure care of the highest quality.

AND IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO TAKE PART IN THE PROGRAM?

If you decide not to authorize the transmission of information, you will need to ask your doctor for a referral slip for a mammogram. You must indicate your refusal on the authorization form for the transmission of information. In this case, you will not be registered in the program, you will not receive a letter informing you of the results and you will not be recalled every two years.

Authorization for the transmission of information
related to participation in the
PROGRAMME QUÉBÉCOIS DE DÉPISTAGE DU CANCER DU SEIN

Please fill in this form. The screening centre needs written proof of your decision concerning the transmission of information. If you give your authorization, the information will be sent to the people in charge of the Québec BREAST CANCER SCREENING program.

The following information is involved: your family name, given name, health insurance number and address; the clinical data gathered when your mammogram is taken; and the results of your mammogram and of any additional examinations.

To indicate whether or not you authorize the transmission of your information, check the appropriate box and sign the form.

If you do not give your authorization, there will be no follow-up of your file under the Québec BREAST CANCER SCREENING program. Because it is important to have a screening mammogram taken every two years, we recommend that you ask your doctor for a referral slip for future screening mammograms.

If you do give your authorization, you may still withdraw from the program at any time. By the same token, if you do not give your authorization, you are free to join the program at a later date.

Your authorization is requested in accordance with the Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information (R.S.Q., c. A-2.1). **All information will be treated confidentially.**

IF YOU GIVE YOUR AUTHORIZATION, THIS INFORMATION WILL BE TRANSMITTED ONLY TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE:

- 1 To the physician in charge of coordinating services offered under the Québec BREAST CANCER SCREENING program in your region, who will ensure follow-up and remind you when it is time to make your next appointment for a mammogram.
- 2 To the person in charge of the Québec BREAST CANCER SCREENING program at the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, to allow that person to:
 - compile the clinical data gathered when your mammogram was taken, as well as the results of your mammogram and of any additional examinations;
 - forward your file to the physician in charge in your new region, in the event you move to a new one.

INFORMATION
The following information is transmitted for the purposes of the Québec BREAST CANCER SCREENING program:

Family name at birth: _____
Given name: _____
Health insurance number: _____
Current address: _____
Postal code: _____
Town or city: _____

The information transmitted for the purposes of the program also includes the clinical data gathered when your mammogram is taken, as well as the results of your mammogram and of any additional examinations.

DECISION
The explanations provided in the brochure entitled *It is better to act than to react* will help you make an informed decision. It is very important to indicate whether you authorize or refuse to authorize the transmission of information by checking the appropriate box and signing the form.

This authorization may be retracted at any time.

I authorize the transmission of the information specified above for the purposes of the Québec BREAST CANCER SCREENING program

I refuse to authorize the transmission of the information specified above for the purposes of the Québec BREAST CANCER SCREENING program

Signature: _____
Date: _____

Santé et Services sociaux Québec

Do not hesitate to speak frankly to staff at the designated screening centre about your fears and concerns, and feel free to ask any questions.

For information:
Info-Santé

www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/PQDCS

Disponible en version française et en vidéo adapté dans la Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).

**Santé
et Services sociaux**

Québec 