

BE BREAST AWARE



Marie Keating

FOUNDATION

making cancer less frightening by enlightening

# BE BREAST AWARE

One of the most important things that you can do for your health is to get to know your breasts. Breast cancer is the most common female cancer so it is important to look after your breasts by being breast aware. Being breast aware means getting to know how your breasts look and feel so you know what is normal for you. You can then feel more confident about noticing any unusual changes.

Women themselves find most lumps. Remember that most breast lumps are not due to cancer but you don't know if you don't ask.

Even though it is uncommon, men can also get breast cancer so they need to be breast aware too.

**Early detection provides the best possible chance of surviving the disease.**

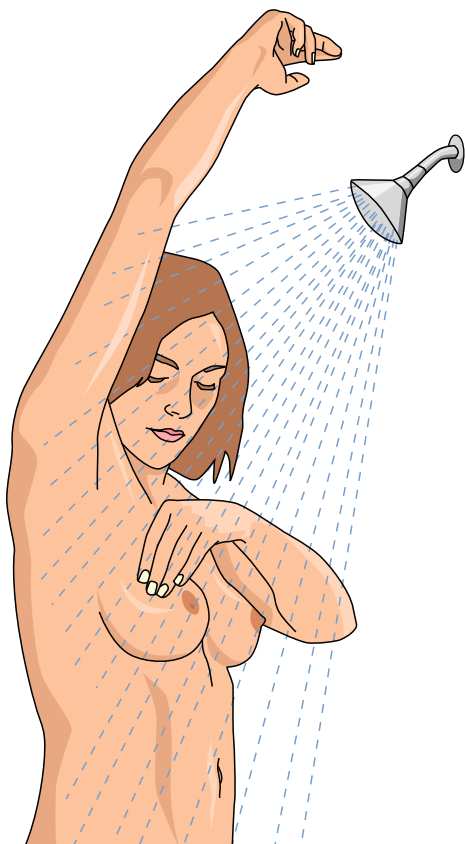
## How can I be breast aware?

Breast awareness means becoming familiar with your breasts, how they look and feel at different times of the month. Try to get used to looking at and feeling your breasts regularly. By doing this you will be more able to notice any changes that aren't usual for you. Use times like having a bath or shower to notice how your breasts look and feel. Running a soapy hand over your breasts and armpit helps you to feel the texture of your breast more easily. You may notice that your breasts change in size, shape or in how they feel at different times of the month. Your breasts may become lumpier or more tender around the time of your menstrual period, for example. As you become familiar with your breasts you'll become more confident in knowing what is normal for you.

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### What are the changes to look for?

- Any lumps, thickening or bumpy areas in the breast or armpit that seem different from other breast tissue. This is very important if it is new
- Any changes in the size or shape of the breast (it may be normal for you to have one breast larger than the other)
- Change to the nipple, such as crusting, ulceration, bleeding or a change in the direction or shape of the nipple
- Veins that are standing out more than usual for you
- Any puckering, dimpling or redness of the skin of the breast



## When should I see the doctor?

You know better than anyone how your breasts look and feel normally, so if you do notice a change do go and see your doctor as soon as possible. Nine out of ten breast changes are not due to cancer but it is very important to make sure.

## What is breast screening and when can I have it?

Women in Ireland are invited for a mammogram (breast x-ray) every two years from the ages of fifty to sixty four. This is a free service offered by BreastCheck which is the National Breast Screening Programme. BreastCheck compiles a list of women eligible for screening from details supplied by the Dept of Social and Family Affairs, General Medical Services (GMS) and health insurance providers. These personal details are kept safe and confidential.

Make sure that you are on the register by contacting BreastCheck on Freephone 1800 45 45 55 or checking online at [www.breastcheck.ie](http://www.breastcheck.ie).

## How can I reduce the risk of getting breast cancer?

The exact cause of breast cancer isn't known but we do know that being female and getting older are the main risk factors. You may help to reduce your risk and look after your health generally by

- Eating a well balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Doing regular exercise
- Not drinking too much alcohol

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## The Breast Awareness 5-point Code

- Know what is normal for you
- Know what changes to look and feel for
- Look and feel
- Report any changes to your doctor without delay
- Attend routine breast screening if you are aged between 50 and 64

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## Who we are

Following their mother Marie's death in 1998 Ronan Keating and each member of the Keating family promised that they would do everything they could to bring an end to breast cancer. They committed to provide all women and their families with the necessary information to prevent cancer or detect it at its earliest stages. Their collective aim was **"making cancer less frightening by enlightening"**. The Marie Keating Foundation is the realisation of a family's dedication – it is a promise to themselves in action.

Through its community information service our Foundation's dedicated nurses have enlightened over 100,000 people of the causes and risk factors of breast and other cancers. The Foundation is continuing to expand its awareness campaigns on each of the key cancers, at local level through its community outreach approach as well as through national campaigns.

The Foundation finances other areas of need in cancer care. Monies raised help to refurbish hospital oncology waiting rooms in making them more comfortable for patients. A limited comfort fund for those in financial difficulty as a result of their illness provides immediate assistance, when required.

The Foundation is committed to raising awareness among young people in schools of cancer and its prevention and to this end, has successfully developed a Cancer Awareness Programme for schools, which will be delivered to all second level senior cycle students.

During its time in operation, the Marie Keating Foundation has become well established and faces a wealth of opportunities and claims on its services and resources.

*On February 2nd 1998, our mother Marie died from breast cancer. At the time and all through her illness, we could do nothing to help our Mother who had, all our lives, done everything for us.*

*We, the Keating family have set up this charity in her name to try to help and prevent others going through what Mam went through and what we are still going through to this day. This is also to show that such a wonderful mother and person did not die in vain.*

*Take care.*

*The Keating Family*



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