



NOVA SCOTIA

BREAST SCREENING PROGRAM

GUIDELINE: RADIOLOGICAL SCREENING OF INDIVIDUALS AT HIGH RISK OF BREAST CANCER

Eligibility

Individuals are eligible for radiological screening managed by the NSBSP if they:

- have no signs or symptoms of breast cancer,
- have not undergone prophylactic double mastectomy,
- are aged 30 to 74 years. 30-69 mammogram and MRI, 70+ mammography only.
- fall into one of the high-risk categories below.

High Risk Categories

1. Known genetic mutation carrier where mutation is associated with a high lifetime risk of breast cancer (e.g., BRCA1, BRCA2, Cowden's Syndrome). The recommendation of a genetics service will also be accepted in the event that a single mutation has not, or cannot, be identified, but the person is considered by the genetics service to be at high risk.
2. Someone who has declined genetic testing and who is the first degree relative of a known mutation carrier (e.g., BRCA 1, BRCA2).
3. High lifetime risk (>25%) as established, and documented, by a standard risk model (e.g., IBIS, CANRISK).
4. History of having received radiation as cancer treatment to the chest area before age 30. Screening is not indicated until 8 years after the end of radiotherapy or age 30, whichever date is later.

Screening Protocol

High risk individuals aged 30 to 69 are screened annually with mammography, followed by breast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) approximately one month later. Those aged 70 to 74 are screened annually only with mammography. Individuals who are in good health at age 75 may continue to be screened, but will not receive reminders from NSBSP.

Individuals cannot self-refer for high risk screening. A person who may be at high risk of breast cancer should speak to their health care provider about whether screening is right for them.



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INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND PATIENTS: RADIOLOGICAL SCREENING OF INDIVIDUALS AT HIGH RISK OF BREAST CANCER

Q. How are individuals referred for high risk screening at NSBSP?

Individuals must be referred for high-risk breast screening at the Nova Scotia Breast Screening Program (NSBSP) through MRI requisition by a primary care provider with clear documentation of patient eligibility for high-risk screening. Documentation must include confirmation of high-risk status either through genetics or oncology recommendation or a validated risk assessment tool. If eligibility is based on a calculated lifetime risk >25%, the risk will be reassessed by NSBSP prior to determining acceptance into the program.

Q. Can individuals aged under 30 be screened?

In some instances, individuals between the ages of 25 and 30 may be eligible for high risk screening; however, they must have an annual referral to initiate screening and will not be considered part of the program until age 30.

Q. Are both mammography and MRI required?

Yes. Mammography is performed first, and until it has been completed, the MRI cannot be booked. A person who has a contraindication for MRI (e.g. claustrophobia, cardiac pacemaker), will be screened only with mammography.

Q. What happens if the screen is normal?

As with average risk screening, they will be reminded to contact the NSBSP to book their next screen – no requisition is required.

Q. What happens if the screen is abnormal?

If an abnormality is found on either the mammogram or the MRI, the report to the health care provider will contain the date, time and location and nature of the diagnostic investigation.

Q. What happens if the diagnostic investigation following a screen abnormal turns out to be normal?

The individual will be sent a reminder to contact NSBSP to book their next screen.

Q. If I have questions, who can I contact?

The NSBSP Navigator is available to answer any general questions, or to discuss a specific patient, 902-471-1411