

NF1 AND BREAST CANCER MYTHBUSTERS

breast cancer awareness

MYTH

I'm too young to worry about breast cancer

Women with NF1 have an increased risk of breast cancer and are predisposed to develop cancer earlier in life than the general population. The NCCN recommends that women with NF1 should be screened for breast cancer at an earlier age than the general population, beginning at age 30.



MYTH

Any new lump or change to my breast means I've got cancer

Not all breast lumps or unusual changes to your breast mean you have cancer. There can be many reasons to explain new changes, including hormones. Most changes turn out to be natural and harmless but it is still important to get them checked out.

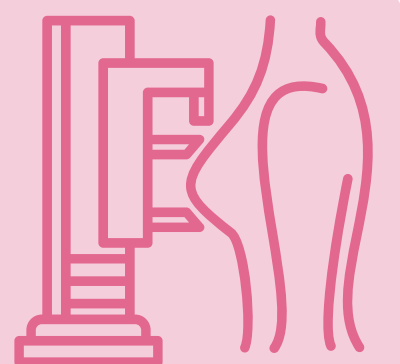


MYTH

I am only eligible for breast screening when I am 40

Within the United States of America, The American Cancer Society recommends annual breast screening from age 30 for women with an increased risk of breast cancer such as those with NF1.

We advise individuals to consult with their healthcare providers for personalised guidance.



MYTH

I should avoid getting mammograms due to the increased risk of cancer from the radiation

While prolonged radiation can cause cancer the amount of radiation delivered from a breast x-ray (mammogram) is very low. You'd receive a similar amount flying from London to Australia and back.¹ The benefits of screening far outweigh the risks.²





NF1 AND BREAST CANCER LUMPS AND LANGUAGE

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FINDING A LUMP OR NOTICING A CHANGE IN YOUR BREASTS CAN CAUSE ANXIETY AND CONCERN. THERE ARE LOTS OF REASONS WHY YOU MAY NOTICE A CHANGE. WHILE MOST BREAST LUMPS ARE BENIGN (NOT CANCER), IT IS STILL IMPORTANT TO GET THEM CHECKED OUT BY A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL.¹

NEUROFIBROMAS Most neurofibromas occur as a result of the rare condition neurofibromatosis (NF1).

Dermal neurofibromas are non-cancerous tumours that grow on or just under the skin. They are usually small and the amount a person has can vary. They can cause itching and discomfort depending on where they are, as well as psychological issues, particularly if there are multiple visual neurofibromas.²

Plexiform neurofibromas occur when neurofibromas develop where multiple branches of nerves come together. They can cause large swellings and sometimes cause symptoms including pain, weakness, numbness, bleeding, or problems with the bladder or bowels.³ There is a small chance these tumours can become malignant (cancerous).⁴

FIBROADENOMA

A very common, benign condition that can occur at any age. A fibroadenoma usually feels like a smooth lump in the breast that moves easily. They are usually painless but may feel tender or painful, particularly before a period. Most fibroadenomas do not need to be treated and they don't usually increase your risk of breast cancer.⁵

BREAST CYST

One of the most common causes of a lump in the breast, breast cysts are a benign condition that can occur at any age but most often affect women over 35. They can feel like a soft or hard lump of any size. Small cysts may be too small to feel while larger ones may be uncomfortable. It's common to have more than one and they may form in clusters. Cysts may become larger and tender before a period. Most breast cysts do not need to be treated and don't increase your risk of breast cancer.⁶

FAT NECROSIS

A benign condition that most commonly develops after an injury or trauma to the breast tissue, such as from a biopsy or surgery. Fat necrosis feels like a firm, round lump. It is usually painless but may feel tender or painful to some people. The skin around the lump may look thickened, red, bruised or dimpled, and it can cause the nipple to be pulled in. It can occur in women of any age and does not increase your risk of breast cancer.⁷

PASH (PSEUDOANGIOMATOUS STROMAL HYPERPLASIA)

A benign breast condition most common in premenopausal women but can affect women of any age. PASH is usually felt as a painless lump which can vary in size. In most cases PASH does not need to be treated and does not increase your risk of breast cancer.⁸

Please note, these are the most common benign breast lumps, but this list is by no means exhaustive. It is always best to get any lump or change in your breast checked by a medical professional.



This infographic was created by **RARE Revolution Magazine** for Childhood Tumour Trust and adapted for different geographical regions
www.childhoodtumourtrust.org.uk



References
[1,5,6,7,8] <https://breastcancer.org/about-breast-cancer/breast-lumps-and-benign-not-cancer-breast-conditions>
[2,4] <https://www.childhoodtumourtrust.org.uk/what-is-neurofibromatosis-type-1-nf1>
[3] <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/neurofibromatosis-type-1/symptoms>



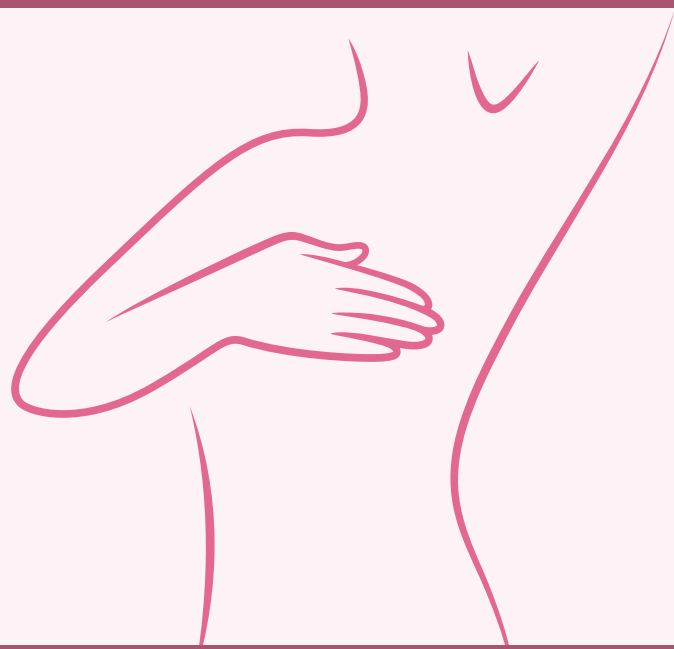
NF1 AND BREAST CANCER

THE FACTS

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INCREASED RISK

People with NF1 are at an increased risk of developing breast cancer, with those under the age of 40 having an up to 5-fold increased risk.



SELF-CHECK

Knowing how to check your breasts, and the changes to look for, can mean spotting breast cancer early. Get to know what is normal for you.

EARLY DETECTION

Spotting breast cancer early can mean improved outcomes.



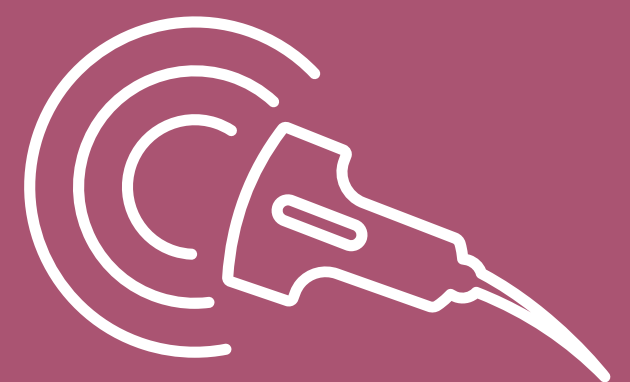
EARLY BREAST SCREENING

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SCREENING OPTIONS

Due to the presence of neurofibromas, it can sometimes be more difficult to detect breast cancer in those with NF1 using digital mammography. Additional screening procedures, such as ultrasound and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), can be useful.





NF1 AND BREAST CANCER SELF-CHECK GUIDE

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NF1

LOOK. FEEL. LEARN. DONE.

NEW CHANGES?

Is there a change in the size or shape of your breast?
Is your nipple pulled or flattened, or is liquid coming from it?
Are there changes in the skin such as puckering or dimpling?
Is there constant or unusual pain in your breast or armpit?

FEELS DIFFERENT?

Are there new lumps or thickening of your breast?
Are there lumps or swelling in your armpit or around your collarbone?

1 TIME A MONTH

Pick a time that works for you and make it part of your routine.
Why not set a monthly reminder!
Checking once a month will help you to learn what's normal for you and spot any changes.

ALL BOOBS ARE DIFFERENT!
GET TO KNOW WHAT IS NORMAL FOR YOU

If you notice any changes that don't feel normal get them checked by a medical professional.
Checking your breasts regularly can help spot any changes and catch breast cancer early,
which can mean improved outcomes.