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Book a date with a friend that could save both your lives

BreastScreen NSW is encouraging women to get together with a friend to book a mammogram in the lead up to Breast Cancer Awareness Month, to boost screening rates and save lives.

More than one in eight women in NSW will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime, but almost half of women aged 50-74 are not getting their recommended two yearly mammograms.

Robyn Schubert, Director BreastScreen NSW South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra said that by taking the time to talk to a friend about screening and arranging to go for a mammogram together, you could not only save her life, but your own.

“We know there are many reasons why women might be missing their recommended mammogram – they put it off because they are too busy, they are nervous about going, or nervous about the results,” Ms Schubert said.

“By encouraging a friend to go with them, women can ensure that making the appointment becomes a priority. It also means that they will have someone to support them on the day, and as they get the results.”

Figures from the Cancer Institute NSW, show that in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, 358 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year alone.

Chief Cancer Officer and CEO of the Cancer Institute NSW, Professor David Currow explained that around 60 per cent of breast cancers are diagnosed in women aged 50-74, which is why screening is so important for women in this age group.

“Our research shows that a lot of women believe that breast cancer will never happen to them. We want women in the Illawarra, particularly those between the ages of 50 and 74, to be aware that breast cancer can happen to them, but that if caught at the earliest stage, can be successfully treated in almost all cases,” Professor Currow said.

“A regular mammogram every two years is the best way for women in this age group to find breast cancer early. By detecting breast cancer early, breast screening not only saves lives but also reduces the likelihood of a woman needing invasive treatment, such as a mastectomy or chemotherapy.

“We have come a long way with cancer treatment but the reality is still that the more extensive the cancer is, the more it can diminish quality of life.”

An appointment with BreastScreen NSW is free and takes about 20 minutes in total. In addition to 46 BreastScreen sites, BreastScreen NSW has 16 mobile vans that provide services to about 180 locations across NSW, including in rural and remote areas.

To book a mammogram today with BreastScreen NSW, please phone 13 20 50. You can search for your nearest BreastScreen NSW service or book online by visiting <https://book.breastscreen.nsw.gov.au/>

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

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