

TAKING CARE OF
MY HEALTH MEANS
**TAKING CARE OF
MY BREASTS, TOO**



Centre de réadaptation
en déficience intellectuelle
GABRIELLE-MAJOR



CENTRE DE RÉADAPTATION
LISETTE-DUPRAS



CENTRE
DE RÉADAPTATION
DE L'OUEST DE MONTRÉAL
WEST MONTREAL
READAPTATION
CENTRE



DÉFICIENCE INTELLECTUELLE
TROUBLES ENVAHISSANTS DU DÉVELOPPEMENT
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WITH HEARTFELT
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THIS BOOKLET CONTAINS SIX SECTIONS:

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Purpose of this booklet: The purpose of this booklet is to make all women aware of the importance of breast cancer screening. It is intended to help them understand what breast cancer screening is and what they can do to look after the health of their breasts. This booklet is also for those involved in supporting women in their efforts to improve or maintain their health. Besides the supplementary information, this booklet also offers ideas for concrete actions that can be useful to those in a supportive role.

Why this booklet exists: Some women are less likely to have access to cancer screening. This is the case among women who are disabled or socially excluded, or who have trouble reading and understanding information communicated to them. Besides problems related to accessing and using information, they also encounter other types of obstacles: communication problems, personal factors (e.g. having had negative experiences with the healthcare system), relational factors (e.g. not having been encouraged to undergo a mammogram), organizational factors (e.g. insufficient time allocated to the appointment), or environmental factors (e.g. distance between the medical clinic and the person's residence).

Among women living in Quebec, breast cancer is the most widespread form of cancer. Because the causes of breast cancer are unknown, screening—that is, looking for signs of a cancer while it is still very small—remains the best way of reducing mortality related to this disease.

This booklet is aimed at making cancer screening available to all women, thanks, in particular, to the Quebec Breast Cancer Screening Program / Programme québécois de dépistage du cancer du sein (PQDCS).

INTRODUCTION

What is this booklet for?

This booklet is to remind all women that:

- ❁ health is important
- ❁ we can do things to stay healthy
- ❁ breasts are a part of the body that should be kept healthy



How to use this booklet?

Consult both sides of this booklet's pages:

- ❁ one side provides general information;
- ❁ the other side provides more detailed information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

How to use this booklet?

This booklet can be consulted in full or in part, alone or with another trusted person, either to prepare for undergoing a mammogram or to find out how women can look after the health of their breasts.

This booklet can also be a tool for working with a group of women who want to know how to look after the health of their breasts.

Don't forget... It is important that screening remains a personal choice. The decision belongs to the woman or to her legal representative if she is under protective supervision. To make an informed decision, women need access to appropriate information and, when needed, must be able to obtain the support they require to ensure their preferences are expressed and taken into account. It is important that their choice not be influenced by a lack of means to be able to access screening, nor by any pressure promoting screening.

Free choice, equitable access to screening resources, and respect for everyone's best interests are the fundamental principles underlying the design of this booklet.

SECTION 1

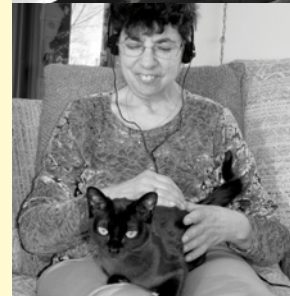
What I can do to be healthy

There are many things I can do to be healthy.

For my health, I can:

- ❁ do physical activity
- ❁ eat fruits and vegetables
- ❁ see my doctor regularly
- ❁ see my dentist regularly
- ❁ relax, do things with the people I love

I can also
take care of
the health of
my breasts.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Looking after the health of their breasts is a process that assumes women know their own bodies and breasts, regardless of their age.

Women are advised to pay attention to any changes that occur in their breasts, even if they regularly undergo screening mammograms. Breast cancer can be discovered based on changes in the appearance or texture of the breasts.

Breast awareness starts with learning to recognize the normal condition of one's breasts. To notice changes, it is a good idea to touch the entire breast, including the nipple.

If any changes are found, it is important to see a doctor.

SECTION 2

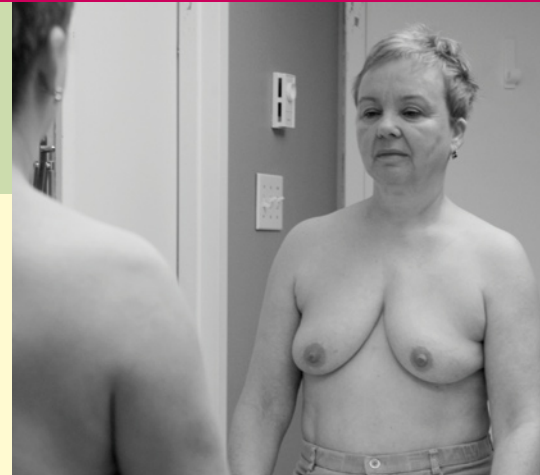
Knowing my breasts better

To know what is normal for my own breasts, I can:

- ❁ look at them
- ❁ touch them
- ❁ bring my questions to someone I trust

Women's
breasts
are all
different.

It's important
to know my
breasts well.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Women who know their bodies are more likely to detect changes in their breasts. Being aware of changes that can occur in the breasts makes it easier to identify them. It is important to tell your doctor about any changes that seem abnormal.

Changes in my breasts:

❁ can be normal

or

❁ can indicate that I have a health problem

Have I noticed any change
in my breasts?

If yes: I discuss it with a doctor
or another person I trust.

Normal



My breast are
more sensitive
during menstruation

Not normal



A new lump
on my breast

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The doctor can do a clinical examination of the breasts. This is a preventive medical practice that is often done as part of a woman's regular medical check-up or a gynecology visit.

SECTION 3

My doctor's role in keeping my breasts healthy

I can visit my doctor to find out if everything is normal in terms of my health.

To look after my health, the doctor can:

- ❁ listen to my heart and lungs
- ❁ measure my blood pressure
- ❁ ask me about what I eat
- ❁ ask me about what I do to stay in good physical condition

The doctor can examine my breasts by looking at them, touching them and asking me questions.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Because the risk of developing breast cancer increases with age, women are advised to:


- have a breast examination done by a qualified health professional at least once a year, if possible;
- between the ages of 50 and 69 years: undergo a mammogram every two years;
- age 70 years and older: ask for their doctor's advice about screening.

Talking with your doctor about the risk factors associated with breast cancer is looking after the health of your breasts.

Before a doctor's appointment, be prepared!

To prepare for my doctor's appointment, I can:

- ✿ think about the questions I want to ask
- ✿ discuss them with someone I trust
- ✿ check to see if there are any changes in my body and my breasts
- ✿ make a list of the things I want to say to my doctor



I can also ask someone to come with me to the doctor's appointment.

I can ask someone I trust to help me make the appointment and to prepare for it. When making the appointment, I can take the opportunity to mention my particular needs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

A mammogram is an examination that can identify early signs of cancer in someone who has no symptoms.

Women between the ages of 35 and 50 and aged 70 years and over can receive free screening mammograms, on the condition that they have a physician's prescription and go to one of the screening centres designated by the PQDCS (section 5). If the mammogram is done outside of these designated centres, women must pay for the service.

SECTION 4

The mammogram: What is it? What is it for?

- ❁ A mammogram is a radiographic (X-ray) examination of the breasts.
- ❁ The device takes a photo of the interior of the breasts.
- ❁ It is the best way to know whether everything is normal, in terms of my breasts.
- ❁ I can undergo a mammogram under the age of 50 if my doctor thinks it is important to do so.

A mammogram can be an uncomfortable examination, but it doesn't last long.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

A woman may need help to make an appointment for a mammogram.

Suggestions :

When making an appointment, it is a good time to:

- ask questions, in order to be better prepared;
- specify if I have any particular needs so that adjustments can be made to the examination process (e.g. setting aside enough time for the mammogram, checking to see whether the mammogram can be done in a seated position).

Before going for a mammogram, remember:


- don't wear creams or deodorants because these substances can appear on the x-ray and can make it harder to read;
- dress in such a way that you can easily remove the clothing from the upper part of your body (wear a shirt or sweater and pants or skirt, rather than a dress);
- avoid wearing jewelry;
- bring the doctor's prescription or the PQDCS letter of invitation (section 5).

You can bring someone you trust to the appointment with you. This person can accompany you in the waiting room and even during the mammogram itself.

THE MAMMOGRAM: WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS IT FOR? (CONTINUED)

To prepare myself for a mammogram, I can:

- ❁ ask questions to the person who gives me the appointment
- ❁ talk about my concerns with someone I trust
- ❁ ask someone to accompany me
- ❁ visit the clinic before the day of my appointment



**Having a mammogram
doesn't change my breasts.**

**When going for a
mammogram, I avoid:**

- ❁ wearing a dress
- ❁ applying deodorant
or cream
- ❁ wearing jewelry

**A few days before my
mammogram, I avoid:**

- ❁ drinking coffee
- ❁ drinking soft drinks
- ❁ eating chocolate

SECTION 4

THE MAMMOGRAM: WHAT IS IT? WHAT IS IT FOR? (CONTINUED)

When I arrive at the clinic, I am shown to a place where I can remove my blouse or sweater to put on an examination gown.

When the technician does the mammogram, I will be asked:

- ❁ to remove my gown;
- ❁ to place my breasts on the device;
- ❁ to hold my position for several minutes.

I can talk about my concerns with the person doing the mammogram.

The person doing the mammogram helps me to get set up and answers my questions.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Screening for cancer at an early stage is the most effective way to reduce the number of deaths caused by breast cancer. The Ministry of Health and Social Services of Quebec has set up the Quebec Breast Cancer Screening Program (PQDCS) to provide good-quality screening services to all women between the ages of 50 and 69 years because this is the age group in which breast cancer is most likely to occur.

All women in this age group are invited by letter to undergo a mammogram every two years. The addresses of the women eligible for the program are transmitted to every Regional Services Coordination Center / Centre de coordination des services régionaux (CCSR) of the PQDCS by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec. This letter, which is sent out by the CCSR, serves as a medical prescription.


Women can also take part in the program using a prescription from their own doctor. To participate in the Program, these women must go to one of the designated screening centres / Centres de dépistage désignés (CDD) that are on the list enclosed with the letter. When signing the authorization form, they can indicate with a checkmark whether they allow the centre to transmit the information on the mammogram to the CCSR in their region. These screening centres are either private radiology clinics or hospital-based clinics that specialize in breast cancer screening.

SECTION 5

How to participate in the *Quebec Breast Cancer Screening Program*

If I am between 50 and 69 years old, I will receive a letter inviting me to undergo a mammogram. This is what is called the *Quebec Breast Cancer Screening Program*.

- ❁ The mammogram will show whether or not my breasts are in good health.



Screening means checking to make sure that my breasts are healthy.

Because breast health can change with age, I will be invited to go back to have a mammogram done every two years.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- To learn more about these designated screening centres, you can contact them directly or ask the person in charge of the PQDCS regional service coordination centre (the list of these centres, by region, can be found on the PQDCS website). Most information about the program can be found in the folder “It’s Better to Act than to React” or on the Program’s website: <http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/santepub/pqdc/index.php?home>
- When making the appointment, you may have to wait a long time on the telephone and you will be given some information. It is important to note carefully the date of your appointment.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE QUEBEC BREAST CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

How do I take part in the Program?

- ❁ I will receive an invitation letter in the mail.
- ❁ I can also use a prescription from a doctor.
- ❁ I select a designated screening centre from the list included with the invitation letter.
- ❁ I call for an appointment.

I note carefully
the date and
location of the
appointment.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

When you arrive at the screening centre, you will be asked to fill out and sign an authorization form for the transmission of information. It is important to know that you must sign this form to make sure that your decision will be recognized, whether you have decided to accept or to refuse to allow your information be transmitted.

If you allow the information to be transmitted,¹ you will be enrolled in the program and will:

1. receive your test results by mail;
2. receive a new invitation every two years.

In addition, the information that is collected will be used to help evaluate the program and maintain its quality. If you refuse to allow your information to be transmitted:

1. you can still undergo a mammogram if you have a prescription from your doctor;
2. you will not receive the results of your mammogram by mail;
3. you will not receive a reminder letter two years later;
4. you can enroll in the program later, in a subsequent screening with a doctor's prescription.

¹ This authorization is signed by the legal representative if the person is under protective supervision.

SECTION 5

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE QUEBEC BREAST CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

- ❁ I go to the designated screening centre on the day of my appointment.
- ❁ I bring my health insurance card and my letter of invitation or my doctor's prescription.
- ❁ I am asked to fill out and sign a form. On it, I indicate whether or not I want to participate in the program.

I can be accompanied
by a person I trust.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

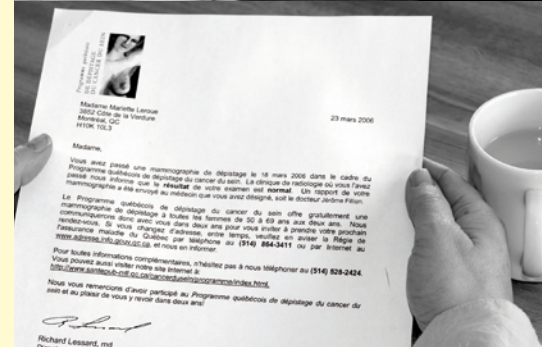
All women who undergo mammograms as part of the PQDCS receive their results by mail.

If the radiologist sees something abnormal in the mammogram, other tests will be recommended. This does not mean there is any cancer. In the majority of women who are called back for further testing, no cancer is ever found. It is the treating physician (family doctor) or a specialist physician in the region who will follow up on the supplementary examinations if needed.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE QUEBEC BREAST CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

If I participate in the program :

- ✿ I undergo a mammogram
- ✿ I receive the results in the mail
- ✿ This tells me if things are **normal** or **not normal** with regard to my breasts
- ✿ Every two years I will receive another letter inviting me to go for a mammogram



SECTION 6

Where to go for additional information

Quebec Breast Cancer Screening Program (PQDCS)

Website: <http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/santepub/pqdc/index.php?home>

Email: pqdc@msss.gouv.qc.ca

The brochure that explains the Program can be downloaded from the website.

Your region's service coordination centre:

Bas-St-Laurent : 1 888 760-5069

Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean : 1 418 695-7750

Québec : 1 877 682-7596

Mauricie et Centre du Québec : 1 888 773-1277

Estrie : 819 346-1110 poste 22460

Outaouais : 1 877 511-7346

Abitibi-Témiscamingue : 1 866 321-3232

Côte-Nord : 418 589-9845, Ext 2238

Nord-du-Québec : 418 748-3575, Ext 5114

Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine : 1 877 270-5069

Chaudière-Appalaches : 1 888 835-7456

Terres-Cries-de-la-Baie-James : 514 861-2352, Ext. 224

Laval : 450 978-2129

Lanaudière : 1 877 418-7346

Laurentides : 1 877 431-7346

Montérégie : 1 888 845-7346

Montréal : 514 528-2424

Nunavik : 819 964-2222, Ext. 235

Resources for groups with special needs:

Office des personnes handicapées du Québec

Website: www.ophq.gouv.qc.ca
Telephone: 819 475-8585 or 1 800 567-1465
Teleprinter: 1 800 567-1477
Fax: 819 475-8467

Quebec Association for Community Living / Association québécoise pour l'intégration sociale – Institut québécois de la déficience intellectuelle (AQIS-IQDI)

Website: www.aqis-iqdi.qc.ca
Telephone: 514 725-7245

Fédération québécoise des Centres de réadaptation en déficience intellectuelle et en troubles envahissants du développement (FQCRDI -TED)

Website: www.fqcrdi.qc.ca
Telephone: 514 525-CRDI (2734)

Fédération des Mouvements Personne D'Abord du Québec

Website: www.fmpdaq.org
Telephone: 514 723-7507

Other resources:

Support and information for people living with cancer Canadian Cancer Society

Website: www.cancer.ca
Telephone: 1 888 939-3333

Curateur public du Québec, Rights of the incapacitated person

Website: www.curateur.gouv.qc.ca/cura/en/majeur/inaptitude/personne/consentement.html

To file a complaint:

The Complaint Examination System

Website: www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/en/reseau/plaintes.php

Assistance to file a complaint : Centres d'assistance et d'accompagnement aux plaintes (CAAP)

Website: <http://fcaap.ca/>
Telephone: 1 877 767-2227
(SOS-CAAP)

