



# ACCÉSSS

Alliance des Communautés Culturelles pour  
l'Égalité dans la Santé et les Services Sociaux

I've been told that one in eight Canadian women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime, and wondered if that was true? After some research, I learned that not only was this true, but that this disease isn't always detectable by touch or accompanied by visible signs. However, the earlier a cancer is detected, the lower the mortality rate.

Fortunately, the Quebec Breast Cancer Screening Program (PQDCS) exists with the goal of prevention in mind, thus avoiding as many deaths as possible.

How does this work? By sending a letter to all women aged 50 to 69 who are insured by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ), inviting them to have a mammogram, which is a breast X-ray, done every two years, free of charge. Women who do not have a health insurance card can contact a health care professional to obtain a prescription allowing them to have this examination, which will incur fees in their case.

To have my mammogram, all that I have to do is schedule an appointment at a dedicated screening centre, bring the required documents with me to the appointment, fill out the consent form on-site, and take the exam. All of the details are explained in the letter, hence the importance of reading it carefully. I also suggest that you ask for an ultrasound, because some cancers are not detected by mammography alone. This option is chargeable, but inexpensive.

My doctor told me that this program has many benefits which include a reduced risk of dying from breast cancer or having to undergo chemotherapy, knowing the general health of my breasts, and more. In order to demystify some popular beliefs, he also shared some facts with me that I would in turn like to share with you:

- Mammograms do not cause cancer and are painless
- It is important to have mammograms regularly
- Breast cancer can occur even in a very healthy person with no family history

As they say, prevention is the best medicine, so don't hesitate to go for your mammogram!

**For more information, consult the [www.accesss.net](http://www.accesss.net) website (records — cancer and immigrant women — PQDCS)**



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