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Early Detection on International Women's Day

Let's have conversations with family and friends about the importance of breast cancer screening this International Women's Day

8 March is International Women's Day, a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. It is a perfect time to have conversations about the early detection of cancer, specifically breast cancer.

Mathivanan Sakthivel, Director South Eastern Sydney Illawarra BreastScreen Service is encouraging women between 50 and 74 years to book a free breast screen (mammogram/breast x-ray) if they have not had one in the last two years.

"This International Women's Day is a perfect opportunity to ask you and your girlfriends, mother, grandmother, sister or daughter – have we had a breast screen in the last two years? If not, it's time to call 13 20 50 and 'make it happen' - which is the theme for International Women's Day 2015" said Mathivanan.

Unfortunately, one in nine women in NSW will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. However the best way to find breast cancer early is through regular breast screening.

Despite the high numbers of women developing breast cancer, many women feel that it will never happen to them. Some believe they don't need a mammogram if they have no symptoms. In fact, a screening mammogram every two years can detect a breast cancer long before it can be felt or seen. Others think if they have no family history of breast cancer they don't need to screen, when in reality, 90 per cent of all women diagnosed with breast cancer do not have a family history.

Women aged 50 to 74 are encouraged to **call 13 20 50** to book a free appointment at their local BreastScreen service. There is no need for a doctor's referral and appointments usually take just 20 minutes. For more information on BreastScreen NSW, visit www.bsnsw.org.au .

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