

Together, with provincial and federal partners,
our Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia created
the

Nova Scotia First Nations Client Linkage Registry*

This is an update to the communities about our health information,
produced by the **Strength in Numbers Project (2016)**.

** At this time, our Registry does not include Acadia and Sipekne'katik
First Nations' population numbers.*

Cancer

Population-level health information
gives us quality data to support
community education and planning.

There were **260**
new cases of cancer
diagnosed in our
communities between
2004-2013 (that's an average
of about 26 cases per year).

Here is the good news:

The number of people in our communities who are
diagnosed with cancer is pretty small. And, our overall rate
of cancer is about the same as you'd expect to see in the
general Nova Scotia population.

Even so, a cancer
diagnosis is challenging
news for anyone. And
chances are, if you
live in a First Nation
community, you have
been touched by cancer
in some way.

The cancers that are hitting
us the hardest are ones that
we can either **prevent** or
beat with **screening** and
early treatment.

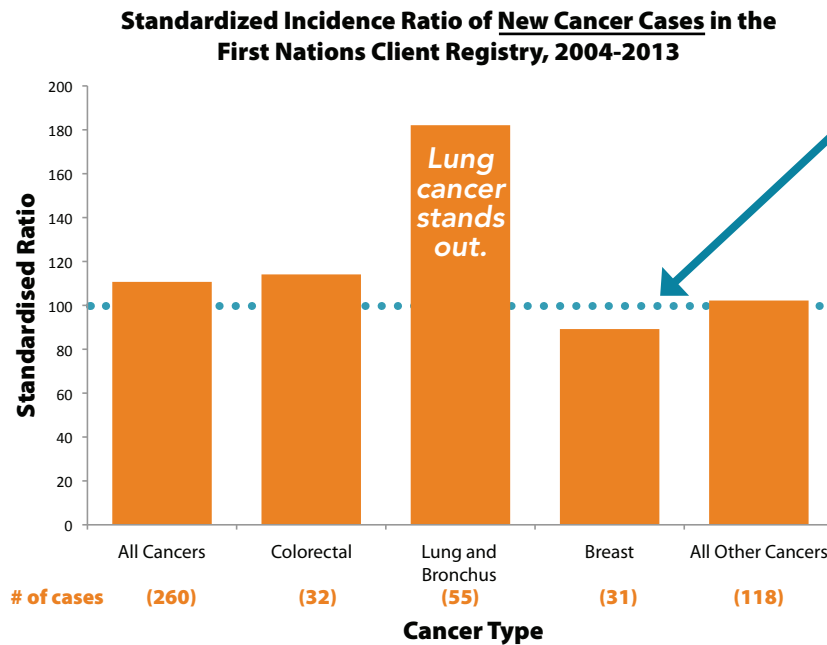


**We know what to do.
We have the information to back it up.**

Data for this bulletin were obtained from:

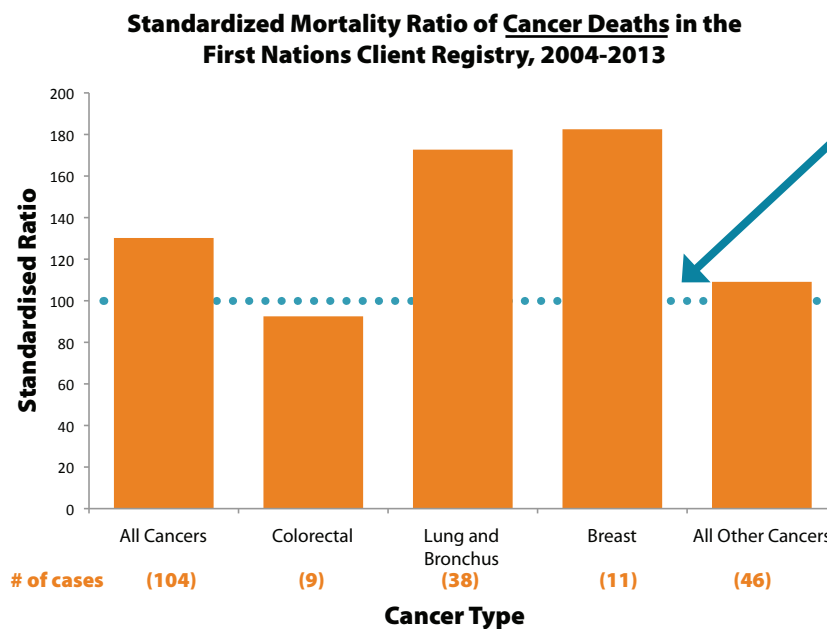
- Cancer Care Nova Scotia
- NS Breast Screening Program
- NS Colon Cancer Prevention Program
- NS Cervical Cancer Prevention Program

Let's draw the line on cancer:



Anything **below** this dotted line (look at breast cancer) suggests that we are **diagnosed** with that cancer at a lower rate than the rest of the NS population

Anything **above** this dotted line means our rate of cancer **death** is higher than the general NS population.



So ... our breast cancer incidence rates are similar to the rest of NS but we appear to die from this cancer at a higher rate.

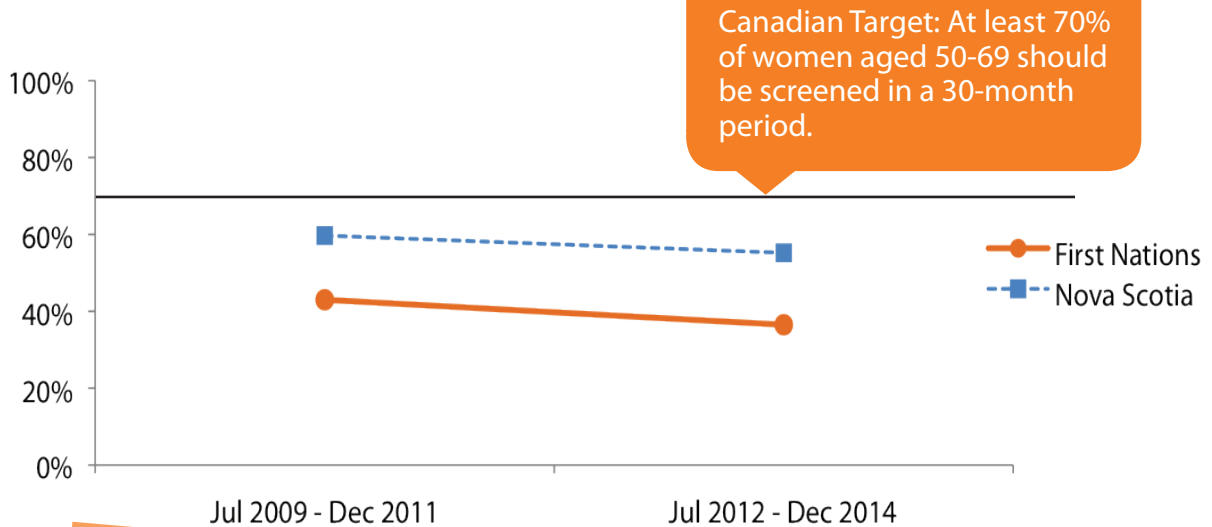
Why?

Let's look at rates of breast cancer screening to find out.

The numbers are telling us *screening* can save your life.

Just look at breast and cervical cancers.

Breast Screening Participation Rates in First Nations and Nova Scotia Women Aged 50-69



Only

36.5%

of the women in our communities who should be going for breast screening actually do. This number has been going down in recent years.

and only **25%**

keep up with their screening. This number has been going down as well.



So ... a reason we are diagnosed with breast cancer at a lower rate but we die from breast cancer at a higher rate could be because we aren't finding the disease early enough, when it is most likely to be curable.

Cervical Screening



We're doing well with cervical cancer screening among First Nations women in their child-bearing years.



But after age 40, there is a steep drop in the number of women from our communities who are going for the Pap tests they need.



70% of all invasive cervical cancer cases occur after reproductive years.



Cervical cancer is almost entirely preventable through regular screening, which is why we need to get our numbers back up!

There are **3** things to take away from our cancer data about **reducing the effect cancer has on our people.**

1 **Many cancers can be prevented.**
Live healthy.

Eat right. Stay fit. Keep a good body weight. And don't smoke or chew tobacco.

2 **Lung cancer is something we can work to prevent.**
Try to quit, or even to smoke less.

If you can't quit smoking (or even if you just live with a smoker), ask your Health Centre about symptoms to look for.

3 **Tell the ones you love to get screened for cancer.**

Men and women need to find out about what cancer screening tests are right for them at their stage of life.

Pap Test



You should be screened for cervical cancer within 3 years of becoming sexually active or at the age of 21, whichever comes later, and then every 3 years after that.

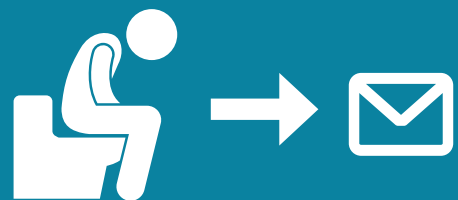
Mammogram



Breast screening is recommended every two years for women aged 50-69. Women ages 40-49 are accepted into the program as well. Talk to your health care provider to see if screening is right for you.

FIT Test

If you're between the ages of 50-74, every 2 years you will get a FIT test kit (fecal immunochemical test) in the mail to screen for colorectal cancer.



Talk to your Community Health Nurse.