

With all the international hype surrounding breast cancer awareness month and our 41st birthday a few months ago, we figured it was high time to get our first ever mammogram, so we called the National Screening Centre for Women and Children (02 447 3496). Turns out that certain days of your cycle are the best time to get a mammogram done plus the centre is very busy, so it's essential that you make a booking



As instructed, we called on the first day of our next cycle and made an appointment for the following week. The Centre is located just off 25th Street between 2nd/Airport Road and 30th/Khaleej Al Arabi – just follow the white signs to the two-storey villa.

Like we'd been told, we took a shower that morning but didn't put on any deodorant or perfume. We also made sure to wear an outfit with a top and separate skirt to minimise the undressing.

Once in the examining room, we were glad we were wearing comfortable shoes and clothes. Once situated, the technician compressed each breast individually between two plastic plates –

very like forming a hamburger patty from a ball of mince. Round two involved the same procedure, only this time the plates we're positioned at an angle.

A lot of women complain that a mammogram is painful, but it really depends on how sensitive you are. For this brave soul, the level of discomfort was somewhere between an awkward silence and being mistaken for pregnant. In truth, it was less painful than we'd mentally prepared ourselves for.

Even better, after three nerve wracking days waiting for the results, we walked away with a clean bill of health and a renewed commitment to taking care of our health.

Laura Fulton

What: Mammogram

Where: National Screening Centre for Women and Children

Cost: free

We say: They're not fancy but they know what they're doing – this is also a good place to take infants for their inoculations and regular check ups

Contact: 02 447 9232 or 02 447 3496