

BREAST SELF EXAMINATION

Regular breast self examination (BSE) is important for the early detection and treatment of breast cancer. It can help you to become familiar with your breasts and to identify any changes that might need to be checked.

When should I do BSE?

Breast cancer affects women of all ages, it is important that all women, including young women, examine their breast regularly.

Once you are 40 years old, do BSE every month. If you still have periods, do BSE three to four days after your period ends. Otherwise choose a particular day of the month.

Getting ready to check your right breast

- lie on your left side with your knees bent;
- now lean back so that your shoulders are flat, twisting at the waist (don't move your legs);
- put your right hand behind your head; and
- use your left hand to check your right breast.

How to check each spot

- use the flat part of your fingers;
- move your fingers slowly in circles at each spot;
- at each spot, feel first with light pressure, then with firm pressure; and
- feel for a lump or thickening



Check up and down in strips

- check your breast up and down in strips, beginning in your armpit;
- first, move your hand slowly down your breast;
- at the bottom of your breast, move your fingers across and start a new strip up your breast;
- continue moving your hand in strips, up and down your breast;
- when you reach your nipple, lie flat by twisting at the waist and straightening your legs;
- examine the rest of your breast in strips; and
- bring your left arm down by your side and feel in your arm pit for lumps.

Checking your left breast

- lie on the right hand side with your knees bent;
- roll back by twisting at the waist so your shoulders are flat;
- put your left arm behind your head; and
- use your right hand to examine your left breast in the same way as for the right breast.

If you have a small breasts you can do BSE standing in the shower using the same method.

Carry out a mirror check

Undress and stand in front of a mirror.

Raise your arms above your head and look for:

- any changes in the size and shape of your breasts;
- any dimpling in the skin;
- any discharge from one of the nipples; and
- any change in your nipple such as a turned in nipple.

If you find a lump or thickening while examining your breast, see a doctor.

Other breast checks

Once you are 40, it's a good idea to have your breasts examined by your doctor.

If you are over 50, a mammogram is recommended every two years.