

# Breast Self-Examination

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The best time to examine your breasts is two or three days after the end of your period, when your breasts are least likely to be tender or swollen. If you do not have periods, pick a day, such as the first day of each month, to remind yourself that you need to perform a BSE.

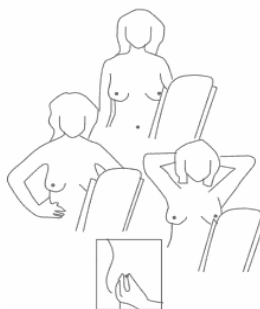


## IN THE SHOWER:

Raise your left arm. Use your right hand to examine your left breast. With fingers flat, touch every part of the breast, gently feeling for a lump or thickening. Press firmly, starting at the outermost top edge of your breast and spiraling in toward the nipple. Examine every part of the breast. Pay attention for any lumps, thickenings or other changes from previous exams. Repeat the exam using your left hand to examine your right breast.

## LYING DOWN:

Place a towel or pillow under your left shoulder and put your left hand behind your head. With fingers flat, press firmly on your left breast with your right hand. Start at the outermost top edge of your breast and spiral in toward the nipple. Examine every part of the breast. Pay attention for any lumps, thickenings or other changes from previous exams. Repeat the exam using your left hand to examine your right breast.



## LOOKING INTO A MIRROR:

Place your hands at your sides. Look carefully for changes in the size, shape and contour of each breast. Look for puckering, dimpling or changes in skin texture. Also, gently squeeze both nipples and look for discharge. Repeat the exam with your hands on your hips, then above your head.

## SITTING DOWN:

With your arm resting on a firm surface in front of you, use the same circular motion to examine your armpits. This area is also breast tissue.



If you notice anything unusual in your monthly exams, see your doctor. Keep in mind that most breast lumps or other changes do not indicate cancer, especially in premenopausal women. However, your doctor will want to perform an exam and, possibly, order tests to determine whether you have breast cancer. The technique shown on this page is based on information from the American Cancer Society.

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