

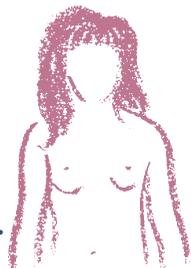
Breast Self-Examination: Your Key to Better Breast Health

Breast self-examination takes just a few minutes each month. It's best to perform your exam about seven to ten days after the first day of your period, when your breasts are least tender. You may feel a bit embarrassed at first, but your breasts are an important part of your body and they deserve your attention. As you do your examination, keep in mind that your goal is to become acquainted with how your breasts look and feel.

1

LOOKING

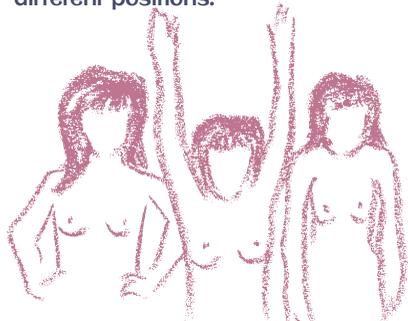
Use a mirror.



First, stand in front of a mirror, keeping your arms relaxed at your sides.

Notice the shape and size of your breasts. Compare both breasts. It is not unusual for one breast to be larger than the other. Now look at your nipples. Notice their direction and how alike they are. Next, look at your skin. Take note of the smooth texture and even color.

Look at the same things with your arms in different positions.



Hands on hips. Bending forward.
Arms raised above head.

2



FEELING

To examine your right breast, lie on your back.

As you do this part of the examination, remember that some lumpiness is normal. Your job now is to learn what your breasts feel like normally, while you are healthy.

Place a pillow or a folded towel under your right shoulder. Put your right arm out, with your elbow at a 90° angle.

3



Check the entire self-exam area. (see dotted line)

The dotted line in this image shows the area you need to examine during BSE. Pay careful attention to the shaded area - most breast tissue is located here.

4



Use the pads of your fingers - not the tips.

Use the pads of the three middle fingers of your left hand to examine your right breast.

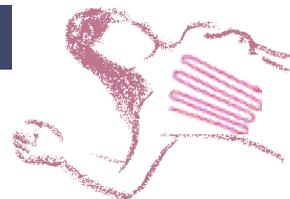
5



Move the pads of your fingers in very small circles.

As you examine your breast, move the pads of your fingers in little circles - about the size of a dime. Don't lift your fingers from your breast as you move them - you might miss something that way. If your fingers rub you too much, use some lotion to make it easier.

6



Cover the exam area in up-and-down strips.

Start in your armpit and move down to just below your breast. Now move your fingers over - just the width of one finger and move up again. Continue this up-and-down pattern until you have covered the entire self-exam area; from your collarbone to just below your breast.

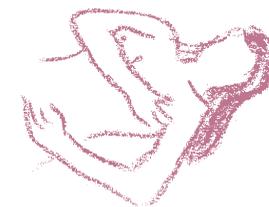
7



Examine all levels of breast tissue.

For each small circle, change the amount of pressure so you can feel all levels of your breast tissue. Make each small circle three times - once light, once medium and once deep.

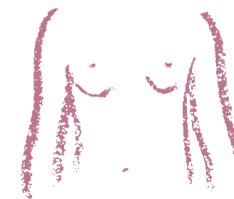
8



Examine your armpit.

Some parts of your breast extend into your armpit. Examine this area again, with your arm relaxed at your side. It will feel a little different in this position.

9



Look for nipple discharge.

Some women may see a clear or milky fluid discharged from their nipple. This is probably normal. A bloody fluid is something that should be checked by your doctor.

10



Repeat these steps on your left breast, using your right hand.