

# Breast self-exam

is a way to check your breasts for any signs that could mean cancer.

- It's quick (about 10 minutes).
- It's easy.
- Do it once a month.

Checking your own breasts, along with regular mammograms and breast exams by your doctor, is the best way to find a lump early.

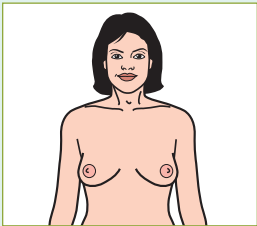
When breast cancer is found early it's easier to treat and cure.

## 3 steps to healthy breasts

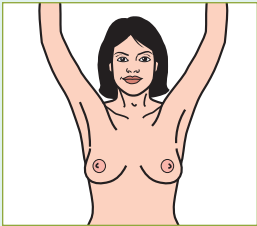
- 1 Have regular mammograms.** Ask your doctor how often you should have one.
- 2 Have regular breast exams by your doctor.** Go every 1 to 3 years before age 40. Go every year after age 40.
- 3 Know your own breasts.** Learn what's normal for you. Report any changes to your doctor.

## How do your breasts look?

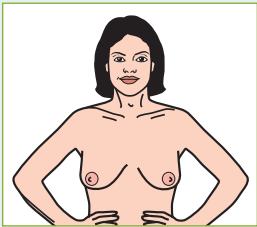
Stand in front of a mirror. Put your arms at your sides and look at your breasts.



Check with arms at your sides.



Check with arms above your head.



Check with hands on hips, bending forward slightly.

- ☐ Has the size or shape changed?
- ☐ Is there any dimpling or puckering?
- ☐ Has the color of the skin or nipples changed?
- ☐ Do you have sores, scaly skin, itching or swelling on or around the nipple?
- ☐ Do you have a discharge from either nipple without squeezing?

See your doctor if you answer yes to any of these questions.

## How do your breasts feel?

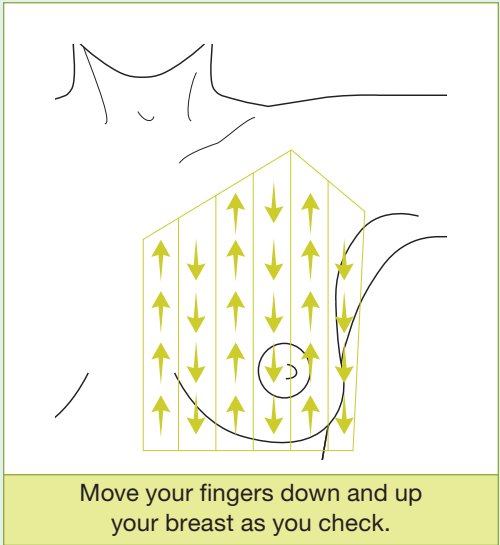
Check standing up.  
(Some women do this in the shower.)

- Put one hand behind your head. Check your left breast with your right hand. Check your right breast with your left hand.
- Pretend there are straight lines on your breast. Use the flat ends of 3 or 4 fingers. Feel your breasts a little at a time, in small, dime-size circles.
- Move your fingers down along a straight line from right under your arm to the bottom of your breast.
- Move your fingers up the next line until you get to the top.
- Repeat until you've checked your whole breast.
- Repeat on your other breast.

Check again lying down.

- Put a pillow under the shoulder of the breast you're checking.
- Use the same steps as for standing up.

Discuss any lump or change with a doctor.



Move your fingers down and up your breast as you check.



"I check my breasts every month."

# Know your breasts

- **Get help.** Ask your doctor to help you check your breasts. Notice what your breasts normally feel like.
- **Be patient.** Don't expect to be an expert right away. It can take weeks or months to get to know your breasts.
- **Check your breasts at the same time every month.** Check after your period. Check on the first day of the month if you don't have periods.
- **You might feel nervous at first.** This is normal. It gets easier.



"I know what my breasts normally feel like.  
So it's easier to notice any changes."

## 5 good reasons to check your breasts

- 1 You learn what your breasts normally feel like.
- 2 You can find a change early, sometimes before your doctor.
- 3 It's quick, easy and free.
- 4 You can do it at home.
- 5 Your breasts get checked 12 times in a year.

## See your doctor if:

- You find a lump, skin change or other change you're worried about.
- You find a new lump that doesn't go away by your next period.
- You find a new lump after menopause.

Most breast lumps that occur before menopause are not cancer. Many are due to normal changes of the menstrual cycle.

Professional models were used in all photos.  
This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.  
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