

How To Do The Self Exam

Why

Most breast lumps are found by women, themselves. The more often you perform a breast self exam, the better you will become at finding any irregular lumps or formations. Ninety percent of all women could survive breast cancer, if detected early.

When

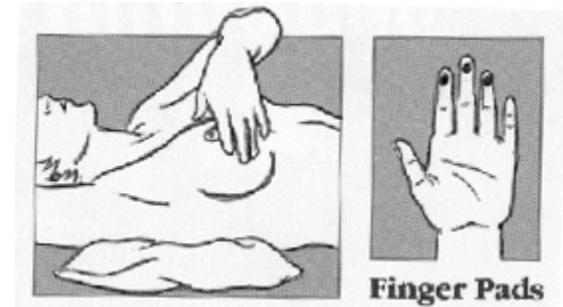
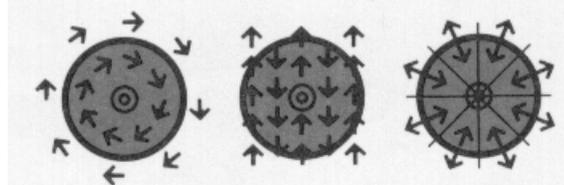
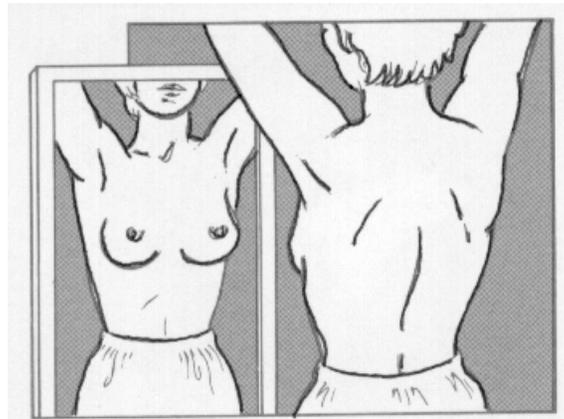
Your breasts are the least tender or swollen directly following your period. Make a habit of performing your breast self exam monthly at this time. If your periods are not regular, examine your breast on the same date each month so that you will remember.

If you are more comfortable in the warm water of the shower, allow your hand to glide over the exam area using the soap as a lubricant.

How

1. If you choose to lie down, place a pillow beneath your left shoulder with your left hand behind your head.
2. Use the pads of the three middle fingers on your right hand to check your left breast.
3. Using a circular motion, press firmly enough to detect the feel of the underlying tissue. Work from the outside perimeter toward the center, including the area toward your neck and under your arm, over top of your lymph nodes.

4. Squeeze your nipple, and look for fluid coming out of the nipple. 5. Repeat these techniques for the right breast.
5. Standing with your arms at your sides, in front of a mirror look for changes in your breasts. Is one unusually larger than the other? A firm ridge in the lower curve of your breast is normal. Look for puckering or dimpling of the nipples.



What To Look For

- A new lump, which may or may not be tender or painful.
- Unusual thickening or change in size of one breast.
- Sticky or bloody discharge from a nipple. Puckering or dimpling of the nipple.

What Else To Do

A mammogram can detect a breast lump before it can be felt during a physical examination. The radiation used in the x-ray is very small, and therefore is quite safe. Have a mammogram before the age of 40 to use as a road map, or baseline, for later mammograms. Between the ages of 40 and 50, have a mammogram every two years. After age 50, have a yearly mammogram.

Have your breast examined yearly by your health care provider. By combining mammograms, your doctor's yearly exam, and your own monthly breast self exam, you put the odds in your favor for early detection and cure