

# Monthly Breast Self-Exams



Check your breasts monthly starting at age 20. Talk with your doctor if you notice any changes in your breasts.

## Three-Step Breast Self-Exam

It's not hard to perform a breast exam. Make sure to follow each step described below.

<b>1</b>	<b>Lying down.</b> Place a pillow under your left shoulder and put your left hand behind your head. With your right hand, examine your left breast, moving up and down, starting from your arm and finishing in the middle of your chest. Use the tips of your middle fingers to feel for lumps, moving them in circular motions – using light, medium and firm pressure over each area. Check for any nipple discharge.
<b>2</b>	<b>In front of a mirror.</b> Start with your hands on your hips. Look carefully at both breasts for any changes in size, shape, color or contour. Then repeat the process of visual examination with your arms at your sides and then with your arms extended above your head, palms pressed together. Note any changes in the appearance of either nipple.
<b>3</b>	<b>Sitting or standing.</b> Raise one arm slightly, and examine your armpit with the other hand. Although you are less likely to develop breast cancer around the armpits, those areas may be the first place you feel a change.

## Tips to help prevent breast cancer:

- ▶ Get regular checkups and mammograms as necessary. Mammograms should be done every one to two years for women age 40 or older. Begin at 30 if you're at high risk.
- ▶ Develop healthy habits. Limit alcohol. Eat low-fat foods and lots of fruits and vegetables. Try to stay close to the weight your doctor says is right for you. Exercise regularly.
- ▶ Stop smoking. When it comes to cancer, tobacco remains the single biggest risk. Smoking is responsible for at least a third of cancer deaths, according to the American Cancer Society.
- ▶ Breastfeed. If you plan to have a baby, breastfeeding can help lower the risk of breast cancer.

If you are diagnosed with breast cancer, your doctor will likely recommend a combination of treatments depending on the type of cancer, the stage of the cancer and your overall health. Common ways of treating breast cancer include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, hormone therapy and immunotherapy.



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