

5 Pattern of Search

Vertical Strip

Use the following search pattern to examine all of your breast tissue. Be sure to palpate carefully beneath the nipple. Any incision should also be carefully examined from end to end. Women who have had any breast surgery should still examine the entire area and the incision. Start in the armpit, proceed downward to the lower boundary. Move a finger's width toward the middle and continue palpating upward until you reach the collarbone. Repeat this until you have covered all the breast tissue. Make at least six strips before the nipple and four strips after the nipple. You may need between 10 and 16 strips to cover all of your breast tissue.

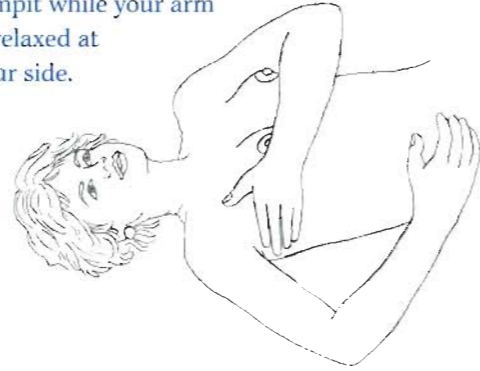


Remember the seven P's for a complete BSE

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|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Positions | 5 Pattern |
| 2 Perimeter | 6 Practice with Feedback |
| 3 Palpation | 7 Plan of Action |
| 4 Pressure | |

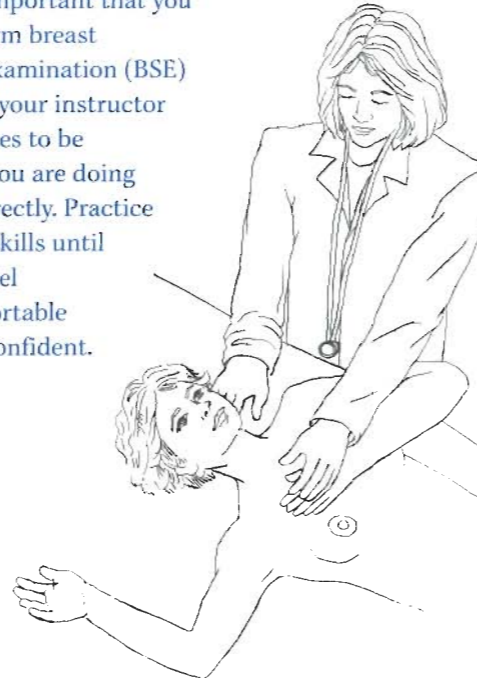
Axillary Examination

Examine the breast tissue that extends into your armpit while your arm is relaxed at your side.



6 Practice with Feedback

It is important that you perform breast self-examination (BSE) while your instructor watches to be sure you are doing it correctly. Practice your skills until you feel comfortable and confident.



7 Plan of Action

Every woman should have a personal breast health plan of action:

Discuss the American Cancer Society's breast cancer detection guidelines with your health professional.

Schedule your clinical breast exam and mammogram as appropriate for your age.

Perform monthly breast self-examinations (BSE). Ask your health professional for feedback on your BSE skills.

Report any breast changes to your health professional.



BREAST

self-examination
a new approach



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Breast Self-Examination

a new approach

All women over 20 should practice regular monthly breast self-examination (BSE). Regular and complete BSE can help you find changes in your breasts that occur between clinical breast examinations by a health professional, and mammograms.

Women should examine their breasts when they are least tender, usually seven days after the start of the menstrual period. Women who have entered menopause, are pregnant or breast-feeding, and women who have silicone implants should continue to examine their breasts once a month. Breast feeding mothers should examine their breasts when all milk has been expressed.

If a woman discovers a lump or detects any changes, she should seek medical attention. Nine out of ten women will not develop breast cancer and most breast changes are not cancerous.

How Often?

American Cancer Society Guidelines for breast cancer detection

Breast self-exam

Age 20 +Monthly

Clinical breast exam

Age 20 - 40Every 3 years

Age 40 +Yearly

Mammography

Age 40 +Yearly

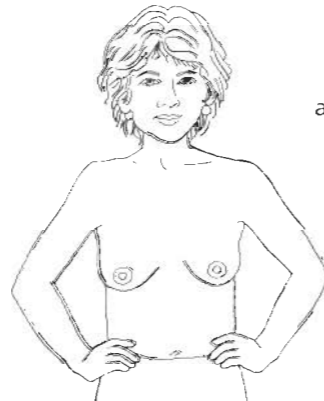
1 Positions

Visual Inspection: Standing

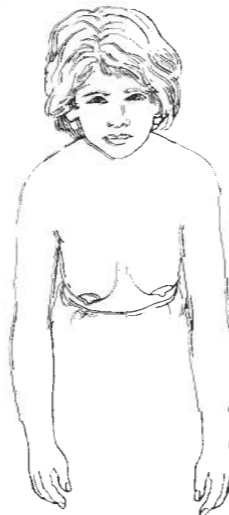
In each position, look for changes in contour and shape of the breasts, color and texture of the skin and nipple, and evidence of discharge from the nipples.



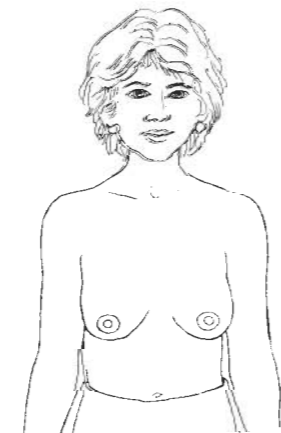
arms raised above head



hands on hips



bending forward



arms relaxed at side

Palpation: Flat and Side-lying

Use your left hand to palpate the right breast, while holding your right arm at a right angle to the rib cage, with the elbow bent. Repeat the procedure on the other side. The side-lying position allows a woman, especially one with large breasts, to most effectively examine the outer half of the breast. A woman with small breasts may need only the flat position.



Side-lying Position: Lie on the opposite side of the breast to be examined. Rotate the shoulder (on the same side as the breast to be examined) back to the flat surface. Use the side-lying position to examine the outer half of your breast.

Flat Position: Lie flat on your back with a pillow or folded towel under the shoulder of the breast to be examined.

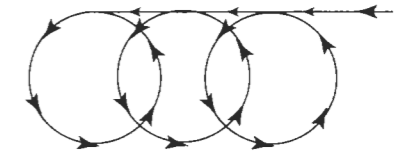
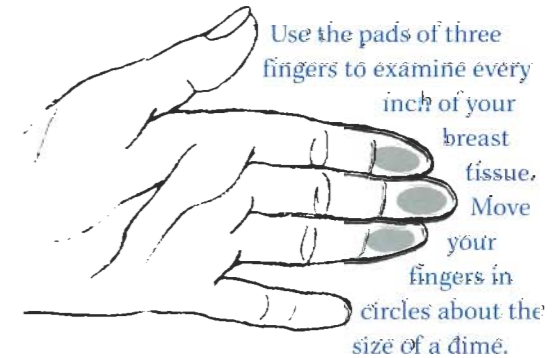


2 Perimeter



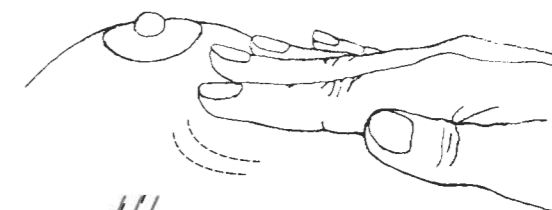
The exam area is bounded by the line which extends down from the middle of the armpit to just beneath the breast, continues across the underside of the breast to the middle of the breast bone, then moves up and along the collar bone and back to the middle of the armpit. Most breast cancers occur in the upper outer area of the breast (shaded area).

3 Palpation with Pads of Fingers



Do not lift your fingers from your breast between palpations. You can use powder or lotion to help your fingers glide from one spot to the next.

4 Pressure



Use varying levels of pressure for each palpation, from light to deep, to examine the full thickness of your breast tissue. Using pressure will not injure the breast.