Early detection is your best defense against breast cancer

Right now there are over three million women living in the U.S. who have been treated for breast cancer. Thanks to modern treatments and early detection, most will go on to live full lives.

Finding a lump or change in your breast does not mean you have cancer. **In fact, 8 out of 10 breast lumps are not cancerous.** Only your doctor can determine if your changes indicate cancer. Always report any changes promptly.

70 to 80 % of women with breast cancer have no risk factors at all.

At Beacon Health System, we give you the information and tools you need to support your breast health. While our primary goal is prevention and early detection of any issues, we also provide leading-edge breast cancer care and other services.

To schedule an appointment or to learn more about our locations, visit **beacon.health/mammography**

Breast care and imaging locations

- Beacon Goshen Outpatient Center
- Community Hospital of Bremen
- Elkhart General Breast Care Center
- Franciscan Beacon Hospital
- Memorial Lighthouse Imaging Center
- Memorial Regional Breast Care Center
- Three Rivers Health

**Not all services are offered at all locations*

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A guide to your breast health

Your early detection can help catch cancer before it spreads

BEACON HEALTH SYSTEM

Recommended breast awareness guidelines

The following screening guidelines are for women with an average risk for breast cancer.

Women ages 40 to 49 should talk with their health care provider about breast cancer screening and may want to be screened with a mammogram.

Women 50 to 74 should have a mammogram at least every 2 years.

If you have an increased risk for breast cancer, your doctor may recommend earlier screenings.

5 breast cancer risk factors:

1. **Age** – Symptoms of breast cancer can appear in women beginning in their 30s, with risk increasing with age.
2. **Previous breast cancer** – The risk of contracting a second breast cancer is greater for women with a personal history of breast cancer.
3. **Family history** – There is 2-4 times increased risk if a close relative had breast cancer, that person was younger than 50 or had cancer in both breasts; or if more than one relative on same side of family had cancer.
4. **Reproductive** – Women who had no children or had their first child after age 30, are usually at higher risk. Having a first child at an early age may protect against the disease.
5. **Hormonal** – Early onset of menstrual period and late menopause are associated with increased risk. May be a slight increase in risk in women using hormone replacement therapy for longer than 10 years.

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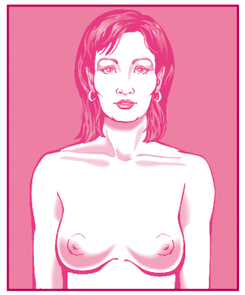
Get to know your normal

Start now by getting to know how your breasts appear normally because a small visual change may be an early sign of a problem. Look for any change in breast size, shape, skin texture or color, including redness, dimpling, puckering or retraction of the skin. Notice any nipple changes, such as scaliness, a pulling to one side or a change in direction. Tightening the chest muscles beneath the breasts can emphasize changes. Therefore, it is important to assume different positions:



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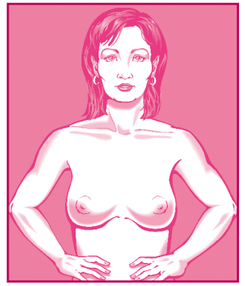
Stand undressed from the waist up in front of a mirror with your arms relaxed by your sides.



2

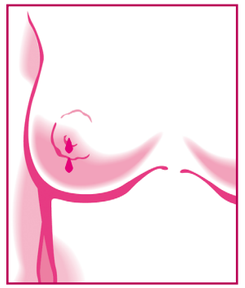
Place your hands on your waist and press inward, then turn from side to side to note any changes.

3

Place your hands behind your head and press forward. Once again, turn from side to side and look for changes. Large-breasted women will need to lift and look underneath their breast.

4

Place your hands on your waist and bow toward the mirror, letting your breasts fall forward. Note any change in breast shape.

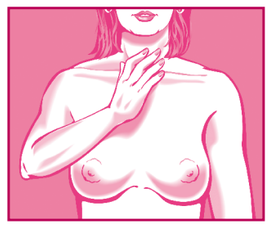


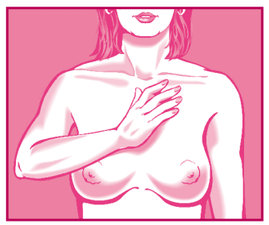
5

Nipple discharge can also be a sign of a breast problem. Look for discharge in your bra or clothing. Do not squeeze your nipples or try to express discharge. Report any discharge to your physician.

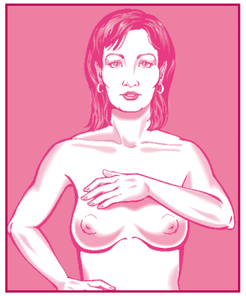
Your self breast exam guide

If you are menstruating, your examination should be done 7-10 after the first day of your menstrual period. Your breasts are less lumpy and tender then. If you no longer have periods, your examination can be performed at any time. Take your time to avoid being rushed when you perform the exam. Choose a time that will afford you some privacy.



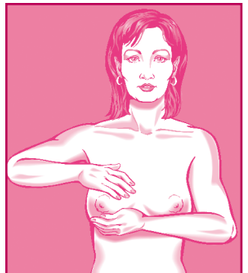


6 While taking a bath or shower, feel above and below the collar bone for pea- or bean-sized lumps or thickening.



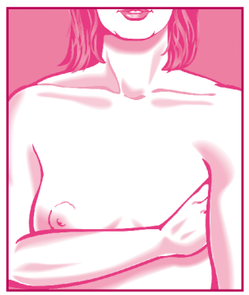
7

From the collar bone, rub down firmly with a soapy flat hand to the nipple of one breast, feeling for any lumps, thickening or changes from previous examinations. Repeat this sweeping motion with the opposite breast, making sure you sweep the entire breast, including under the arm and the middle of the chest.



8

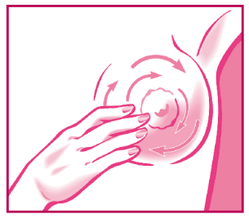
Lift the breast and lay it flat in the palm of your hand. Sandwich the breast by placing your palm down over it. Feel carefully with your top hand all the way along and across the breast, feeling the tissue for any thickening or lumps. Keep your fingers flat and in contact with the skin at all times so as not to miss touching all surface areas. Touch all the way out to the end of the nipple.



9

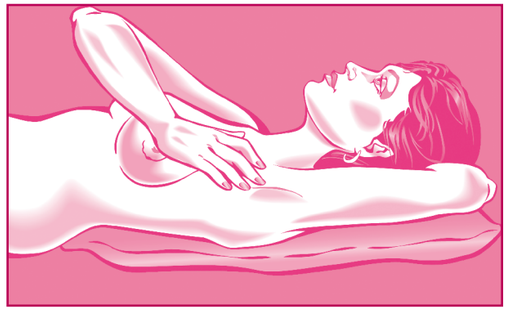
Check for lumps or thickening under your arm while relaxing your arm at your side. Reach across with your other hand to feel the area. Check deeply up and down the inside of the armpit and up and forward toward your chest. Note any changes from previous examinations. Repeat on the other side.

To schedule an appointment or to find a location, visit beacon.health/mammo

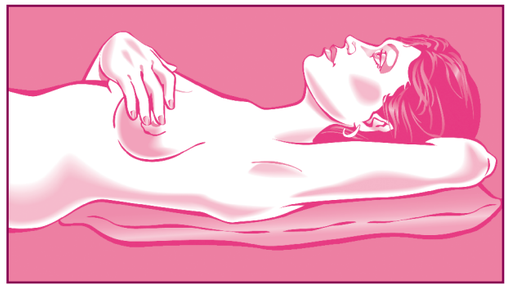


10

After bathing, lie down to complete the exam. Put your left hand behind your head and reach across with your right hand to your left breast. (A little lotion or baby oil on your fingers will make them more sensitive.) Place your right hand at the top of your left breast, holding your fingers together and flat. With firm, even pressure, move your hand in a wide circle around the breast, letting the breast tissue slide under the pads of your fingertips.



11 Move your hand in increasingly smaller circles until the entire breast is covered.



12 Place your fingers flat on the nipple and depress, feeling beneath for any changes. Now, reverse your hands and repeat the exam on your right breast.