

The chances of women in the United States having invasive breast cancer some time during her life is about 1 in 8. Right now there are slightly over 2 million women living in the U.S. who have been treated for breast cancer. Thanks to modern treatments, most will go on to live full lives.

The key to successful treatment, however, lies in early detection, and for that, every woman must depend on regular self breast examinations. Nine out of 10 breast lumps are found by women themselves.

Eight out of every 10 breast lumps are not cancerous, but that does not lessen the need to do monthly self breast examinations—at first, to find out what is normal for your breasts, and then for lifelong self-protection.

Recommended Breast Screening Guidelines for Women From Puberty – Age 49:

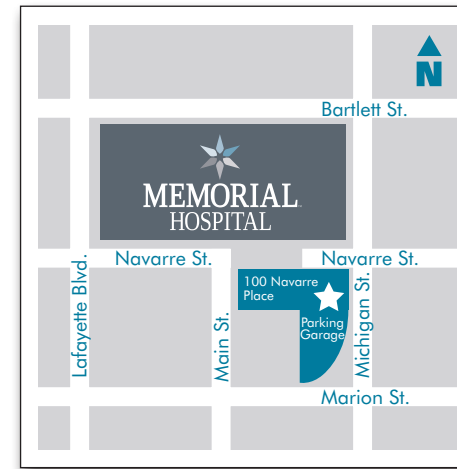
- Monthly self breast examination
- Annual breast examination by a trained health professional
- Women between ages 40 and 49 should have a mammogram every year, depending on their physician's recommendations

Recommended Breast Screening Guidelines for Women 50 Years and Older:

- Monthly self breast examination
- Annual breast examination by a trained health professional
- Annual screening mammogram

Screening recommendations are for women who have no symptoms of breast cancer. Women identified as being at high risk for breast cancer should ask their physician for specific guidelines.

Adapted from the
Cancer Prevention Detection Program
The University of Texas
MD Anderson Cancer Center



Park in the Navarre Garage and take the elevators to the sixth floor.

REGIONAL BREAST CARE CENTER
100 Navarre Place, Suite 6655 | South Bend, IN 46601
574.647.7700 or 800.284.6850
QualityOfLife.org/bcc



LIGHTHOUSE IMAGING CENTER
6901 N. Main St. | Granger, IN 46530
574.647.7700 or 800.284.6850
QualityOfLife.org/bcc



A Guide to Your Self Breast Exam



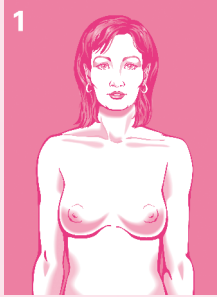
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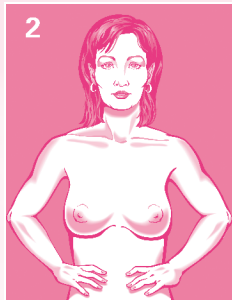


Self Breast Exam Basics

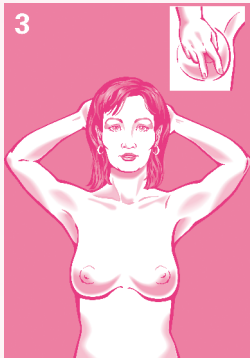
1 First, you should know how your breasts normally look. A small visual change may be an important early sign of a problem. Stand undressed from the waist up in front of a mirror with your arms relaxed by your sides. Compare your breasts while turning from side to side. Look for any change in breast 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.



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.

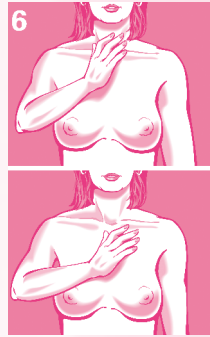


4 Place your hands on your waist and bow toward the mirror, letting your breasts fall forward. Note any change in breast shape.

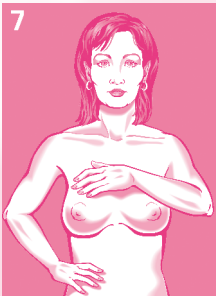


5 Nipple discharge can also be a sign of a breast problem. Look for discharge in your bra or clothing. Do not squeeze your nipples or try to express discharge. Report any discharge to your physician.

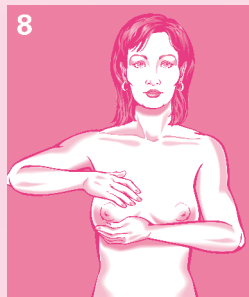
6 While taking a bath or shower, feel above and below the collar bone for pea- or bean-sized lumps or thickening.



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.



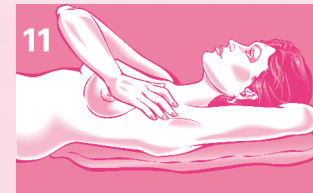
9 Check for lumps or thickening under your arm while relaxing your arm at your side. Reach across with your other hand to feel the area. Check deeply up and down the inside of the armpit and up and forward toward your chest. Note any changes from previous examinations. Repeat on the other side.



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.



Finding a lump or change in your breast does not mean you have cancer. As noted before, 8 out of 10 breast lumps are not cancerous. Only your doctor can be sure. Report any change promptly. Early detection is the best defense.

Ideally, self breast examinations should be done 7-10 days after the first day of your menstrual period. Your breasts are less lumpy and tender then. If you no longer have periods, your self breast 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.

Always remember this is a guide. The most important aspects of self breast exams are to be familiar with your breasts and to report any changes.