



Beginning at the outer edge, press the flat part of your fingers in small circles, moving the circles slowly around the breast. Gradually work toward the nipple. Be sure to cover the entire breast. Pay

special attention to the area between the breast and the underarm, including the underarm itself. Feel for any unusual lump under the skin.

STEP 5

Gently squeeze the nipple and look for a discharge. If you have any discharge during the month whether or not it is during the self-exam, go to your doctor.



Repeat steps 4 and 5 on your right breast.



STEP 6 Steps 4 and 5 should be repeated lying down. Lie flat on your back with your left arm over your head and a pillow or folded towel under your left shoulder.

This position flattens the breast and makes it easier to examine. Use the same circular motion described earlier. Repeat the exam on your right breast.

What I am looking for during the breast self-examination?

You should look for:

- An increase or decrease in size, though it is very common to have one breast larger than the other.
- Changes in the outline or shape of the breast causing flattening of the skin
- Dimpling, creasing or puckering of the skin.
- A change in direction of the nipple or if it has started to draw in. You should not worry about nipples which have always been drawn in.
- Any nipple discharge. Some women produce a clear or milky discharge which is normal for them.
- New veins that stand out, particularly on one breast and not the other.
- Any skin changes on the breast or nipple.

What am I feeling for?

- Areas of thickening.
- Lumps in any shape or form.
- Any lumpy areas.
- New or persistent pain or tenderness within the breasts.

Any changes you find that are new for you must be checked by your doctor.

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre
7A Block R-3, Johar Town, Lahore, Pakistan.
Tel: +92 42 35905000 | UAN: +92 42 111 155 555
www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk

BREAST AWARENESS AND SELF-EXAM



Shaukat Khanum
Memorial Cancer Hospital
and Research Centre

What is breast awareness?

Breast awareness is about getting to know how your breasts look and feel and what is normal for you at different times of the month. When you become familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel, it will become easier for you to detect any changes.

Remember that nine out of ten lumps or changes are harmless. There are many myths and stories about what causes breast cancer. However, if you note any changes in your breast appearance or have any worries or anxieties, please contact your doctor.

Who should be breast aware?

Every woman, from puberty onwards, should become breast aware. It is recommended that women should begin monthly breast self-exams in their early twenties.

Women with very lumpy breasts may find this difficult. Do try to become familiar with any lumpiness and, if you are worried, seek advice from your doctor. The risk of getting breast cancer increases as you get older.

When should I examine my breasts?

There is no specific time. The best time to usually check your breasts is 2-3 days after your period ends. If you no longer have periods, choose a particular day such as the first day of the month to remind yourself to do breast self-exam.

If you become pregnant, you should still check your breasts regularly, changes in size and texture are quite normal.

How often should I check myself?

Check your breasts regularly, once every month. Do not examine your breasts more frequently than once each month because then you may not detect subtle or small changes.

Breast Self-Examination

Getting to know what your breasts look and feel like is in the interest of good health. It is important to know what is normal for you, so that you can detect any changes. The best way to become familiar with your breasts is to perform monthly breast self-examination.

How should I carry out a breast self-exam?

There are two ways of examining your breasts: looking and feeling.



Find a room where you feel comfortable that is also well lit.

STEP 1 Stand in front of a mirror; inspect both breasts for anything unusual such as any discharge from the nipples or puckering, dimpling or scaling of the skin.

STEP 2 Watching closely in the mirror, clasp your hands behind your head and press your hands forward.



STEP 3 Next, press your hands firmly on your hips and bow slightly towards the mirror as you pull your shoulders and elbows forward.

STEP 4 Some perform the next step in the shower because fingers glide over soapy skin, making it easy to concentrate on the texture underneath.

Raise your left arm. Use three or four fingers of your right hand to explore your left breast firmly, carefully, and thoroughly.

