



Tips for Breast Cancer Detection

Be sure to consult your health professional for full information.

Breast Self-Exam

- If you are 20 years of age or over, every month

Clinical Breast Exam

- If you are 20 to 39, every three years
- If you are 40 or over, every year

Mammography

- If you are 40 or over, every year

How to Perform Breast Self-Exams

- In the shower, raise one arm and place the flat part of your fingers (not tips) on your breast's outer edge. Feel for thickenings, lumps, or changes as you firmly guide your hand in small circles, spiraling toward the nipple. Examine your armpit. Use this procedure for both breasts.
- Gently squeeze both nipples and look for any discharge.
- In front of a mirror, press your arms forward as you clasp your head. Look for any changes, like puckering, dimpling or changes in skin texture.
- In front of a mirror, pull your shoulders and elbows forward as you press your hands on your hips and lean slightly toward the mirror. Examine your breasts for changes.
- Lie flat with a towel folded under your right shoulder for support and your right arm over your head. Firmly move your fingers in small circles, spiraling toward the nipple of your right breast. Examine your armpit. Repeat this procedure for your left breast.



Breast Cancer

Don't let it take you by surprise.



Breast cancer is a serious condition. It is estimated that 39,600 women will die of breast cancer this year alone. The good news is that there are steps you can take to help prevent being one of the women included in these statistics. In fact, research shows that significantly fewer breast cancer deaths would occur if women over age 40 had regular mammograms and performed monthly breast self-exams.

You're worth the time it takes.

You spend a lot of time doing things for others. Chances are, it's a big part of your day. Yet somehow, you manage to squeeze in a little time to take care of yourself. Vitamins, sunscreen, and exercise may be part of your routine. They help keep you healthy. So why aren't mammograms and breast self-exams part of your routine? They don't take much time, and they might save your life. Take a moment for yourself to learn more about regular mammograms and breast self-exams. Because there's nothing routine about breast cancer.

Q: How much time does it take to have a mammogram?

A: In most cases, it takes less than one hour to have a mammogram. The actual procedure usually takes about 15 minutes, but you will probably have to wait a few minutes before you get in and then you may be asked to wait while the technicians or doctors look at the x-rays taken.

Q: How much time does it take to do a breast self-exam?

A: It only takes a few minutes each month to perform a breast self-exam; you are certainly worth the time it takes.

Mammogram: Providing a Closer Look

A mammogram is an x-ray of your breasts that can detect a lump long before you might feel it during your monthly self-exam or even before your health care professional finds it during your regular clinical exam.

Q: Why is it important to find a lump early?

A: Finding a lump early increases your chances of surviving breast cancer, if breast cancer is diagnosed. And, when you find breast cancer early, you have more treatment options than when you find the cancer in a more advanced stage.

Q: If mammograms are x-rays, are they safe?

A: Yes. The techniques and equipment used for mammography are designed to deliver extremely low doses of radiation. Federal guidelines limit the radiation used for mammography. In practice, most mammograms deliver only a fraction of the specified amount of radiation.

Q: What's it like to get a mammogram? Does it hurt?

A: When you get a mammogram, you stand next to a machine, and a specially trained technologist helps place your breast in the proper position on a plastic plate. A second plate is placed on top of your breast and, just for a few seconds, a small amount of pressure is applied to the breast. This flattens the breast slightly so a good, clear x-ray can be taken. Two pictures of each breast are usually taken. You may feel a little discomfort during the process, but the entire mammography time is only about 15 minutes. The process is easier than you might think, and probably less painful than you imagine.

