

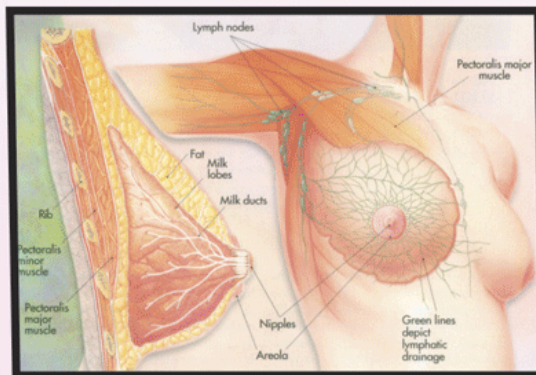


**SGPGI BREAST HEALTH PROGRAM**

[www.sgpgibreasthealth.org](http://www.sgpgibreasthealth.org)



# **Your guide to Early Detection of BREAST CANCER**



*The Female Breast : Its Physical Form*

**Breast Cancer  
is Curable  
if detected  
Early.**

## **BREAST CLINIC**

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## Early Detection of Breast Cancer

Breast Cancer is curable if detected at an early disease stage. This can be achieved by following:

**Awareness** : Being aware that breast cancer is a common disease in women after 45 years of age.

**Breast Self Examination** : Examination of the breasts in a systematic and regular manner by a lady her-self. **This booklet provides a step-wise guide to "how to examine one's own breasts."**

**Clinical Breast Examination** : Periodic-once every year-examination of a normal Lady's breast by a doctor/surgeon.

**Detection by Mammography** : Screening mammography is a specialized X-ray test of the breasts. It may be performed once every year to once every alternate year to detect cancers even before it can be felt.

### BREAST SELF-EXAMINATION a Step-wise Guide

Detecting and treating Breast Cancer at an early stage is the only way of curing this disease without the mutilation of removal of breast by an operation. Periodic examination of one's own breast by a lady can detect a tumor in majority of cases, and thus provide a chance of cure.

A woman's breasts change throughout her life. Factors such as age, monthly menstrual cycle, pregnancy, breast feeding, birth control or other hormone pills, menopause, or a bruise or blow to the breast can cause these changes. In addition, breasts vary in size, shape, and texture. Because most breast lumps are found by women themselves, you should learn how to examine your breasts and do so regularly. As you

#### step 1

Here's what you should do to check for changes in your breasts. Stand before a mirror. Check each breast for anything different from the previous exam, such as any discharge from the nipples, puckering, dimpling, or scaling of the



skin. Each time you examine your breasts you will become more familiar with how they appear and feel, making it easier to notice any changes that may occur. Notice the normal size and shape of each breast (it is not unusual for one breast to be larger than the other) and the normal position of the nipple, making sure both your shoulders at the same level.



## step 2



Clasp your hands behind your head and press them forward. You should feel your chest muscles tighten. Look in the mirror at the shape and contour of your breasts. Take your time; again, look for any changes in the size and shape of each breast and look for any swelling, dimpling, rash, discoloration, or other unusual changes in the skin. Slowly rotate your body from side to side to better view the size and shape of your breasts.

## step 3



Next, press your hands firmly on your hips and bend slightly toward your mirror as you pull your shoulders and elbows forward. Once again, you should feel your chest muscles tighten. Look for any change in the shape or contour of your breasts as well as any change in the nipples.

## step 4



Gently squeeze each nipple and look for a discharge. Begin at the outer edge of the areola drawing your fingers towards the nipple. If present, see your doctor. In fact, if you have a discharge at any time you should check it out with your doctor. Remember, most nipple discharges are harmless.

## step 5



The next step is best done in bath or shower with soapy fingers to glide easily over the skin. Raise your left arm. Use the pads of the fingers of your right hand to check your left breast and the surrounding area - firmly, carefully and thoroughly. Feel for any unusual or new lump or mass under the skin. A lump is unusual if it has not been felt during earlier breast exams and it now stands out against the normal feel of your breast.

do this, you will develop more confidence in knowing how your breasts normally feel and you should be able to recognize any changes. If you do find a change, don't let fear keep you from seeing your doctor, as most breast lumps are benign (non-cancerous). When breast cancer is found and treated early, a woman has more treatment

## step 6

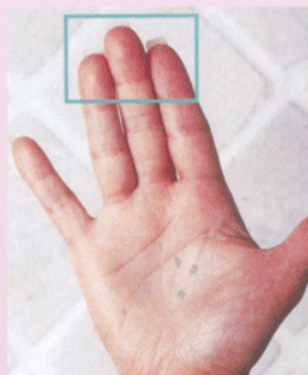
Repeat step 5 lying down. Lie flat on your back, with your left arm over your head and a pillow or folded towel placed under your left shoulder. This position flattens the breast and makes it easier to examine. Check the left breast and the area around it very carefully,



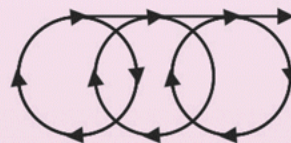
using one of the patterns described on the opposite page. Repeat the exam on the right breast. If your breasts are large, you may need to hold the side of each one steady with your other hand while you are performing the examination.

choices and a good chance of complete recovery, so early detection is very important. Breast self-examination should be one component of your breast health program, which may also include mammography at an appropriate age and physical examination of your breasts by a trained doctor.

There are different patterns or techniques to palpate or feel the breasts. One is not necessarily better than others. Consistency is the important issue. By using the same technique a woman can more easily identify a change. Always cover the entire breast and pay special attention to the area between the breast and the underarm, including the underarm itself. Check the area above the breast, up to the collarbone and all the way over to your shoulder. This area contains breast tissue.



Use the pads of your fingers not your fingertips.



Feel your breast in overlapping areas without lifting your fingers from the breast.

Feel the tissue by pressing your fingers in small, overlapping areas about the size of a one rupee coin. To make sure that you cover your entire breast, take your time and follow a consistent pattern: circles, lines, or wedges.

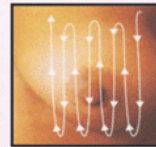


Breasts are made up of ducts, lobes, lobules, fibrous tissue, and fat, with underlying muscle and bones (ribs). Therefore, it is normal for the breasts to feel lumpy or uneven. This can vary during your monthly cycle. Before your menstrual period begins, and sometimes during your period, you may experience some tenderness, pain, or lumps in your breasts because extra fluid collects in the tissue. This is normal.

**Procedure I** - Beginning at the outer edge of your breast, move your fingers slowly around the entire breast in a circle. Move around the breast in smaller and smaller circles, gradually working toward the nipple. Don't forget to check the underarm and upper chest areas too. Before concluding the exam, depress the nipple into a natural "well". It should feel smooth.



**Procedure II** - Start in your under-arm area and move your finger downward gradually until they are below the breast. Then move your fingers slightly toward the middle and slowly back up. Go up and down until you cover the entire breast area. Be sure to check the underarm area and the upper chest. Before concluding the exam, depress the nipple into a natural "well". It should feel smooth.



**Procedure III** - Starting at the outer edge of your breast, move your fingers toward the nipple and back to the edge. Check your entire breast, covering one small wedge-shaped section at a time. Again, be sure the check the underarm area and the upper chest. Before concluding the exam, depress the nipple into a natural "well". It should feel smooth.



*Start with your left breast, then repeat the exam on your right breast.*

## step 7

If you feel something in one breast that appears unusual or different from before, check to see if it is present in your other breast. If the same structure is in the same place in both breasts, the chances are good that your breasts are normal. If you find a lump a few days before or during your menstrual period, re-examine your breasts at the end of your period. Often a lump that is found at this time may be due to the normal collection of fluid during your period. If the lump doesn't disappear before your next period begins, see your doctor soon.

If you menstruate, the best time to do BSE is 2 or 3 days after your period ends, when your breasts are least likely to be tender or swollen. If you no longer menstruate, pick a day, such as the first day of the month, to remind yourself it is time to do BSE and write it down. If you are just learning how to examine your breasts, you may want to do BSE once a week for a few months to see how your breasts change over time. Once you know what is normal for you, do BSE regularly as part of body awareness.

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