

5 *Pattern of Search*

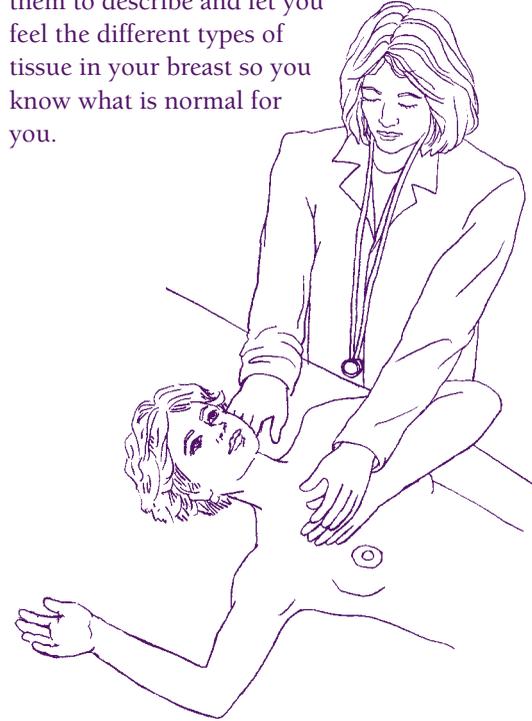
Go up and down in rows in the exam area (like mowing a lawn) to examine all of your breast tissue. Be sure to palpate carefully right over the nipple. Start in the armpit and move down to the bra line. Move a finger pad width over and go all the way up to the collarbone. Move a finger pad width over and go back down to the bra line. Keep making these rows until you get to the breastbone. You may need between 12–26 rows to cover all of your breast area.



⚡ Women who have had breast surgery should also examine the entire area and along the scar.

6 *Practice with Feedback*

Have your doctor or nurse show you how to do BSE. Then ask them to watch you do the exam to see that you are doing it right. Ask them to describe and let you feel the different types of tissue in your breast so you know what is normal for you.



⚡ If you feel anything new in your breast, call your doctor or nurse right away.

7 *Plan of Action*

You should have a personal breast health plan:

Discuss breast cancer early detection guidelines with your doctor or nurse.

Schedule your clinical breast exam and mammogram as appropriate for your age.

Perform BSE monthly, if you choose to do so.

Report any breast changes to your doctor or nurse.

Women age 40 and older may qualify for a free clinical breast examination and mammogram.

Call
1-800-511-2300

Monday–Friday 9 am –7 pm
We speak English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean and Vietnamese

www.dhs.ca.gov/cancerdetection



CDS would like to thank the American Cancer Society, California Division for the initial design of this brochure.

July 2006

Breast Breast Self-Examination



*Do It For
Yourself*



Cancer Detection Programs:
Every Woman Counts

**Cancer Detection Section
California Department of
Health Services**

Breast Self Examination (BSE)

Do It For Yourself

- ⌘ Breast self examination can be a useful tool in screening for breast cancer.
- ⌘ The way breasts look and feel is different for every woman. The goal of **BSE** is to become familiar with the way **your** breasts look and feel to you. Then, if anything changes you are more likely to notice it earlier so you can see your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.
- ⌘ You can talk to your doctor or nurse about the benefits and limitations of BSE.
- ⌘ If you decide that BSE is right for you, this brochure will help you know how to do it right.
- ⌘ Some important tips to remember:
 - Examine your breasts once a month when they are least tender (usually 5-10 days from the first day of your period.)
 - If you no longer have periods, pick another day each month that will remind you to do BSE.
 - If you are breast feeding, empty your breasts first.
 - Call your doctor or nurse if anything changes.
- ⌘ Remember, most breast changes are NOT cancer but DO follow-up to be sure!

The Three Breast Cancer Screening Tests:

Clinical Breast Examination

(by a doctor or nurse)

Age 20 – 40.....Every 3 years

Age 40 and olderYearly

Mammogram

Age 40 and olderYearly

Breast Self Examination

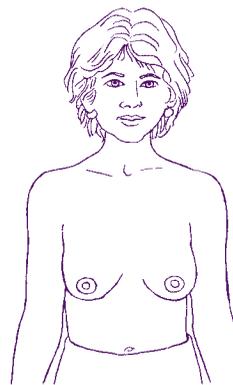
Age 20 and olderOnce a month

Follow the 7 “Ps” of BSE:

1 Positions (Stand & Lie Down)

Stand to look at your breasts:

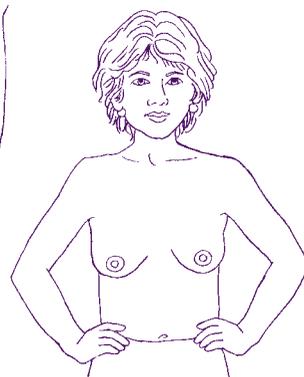
Standing in front of a mirror, in each of 3 positions, look for changes in size and shape of the breasts, color and texture of the nipples and skin and direction your nipples point.



arms relaxed at side



arms raised above head



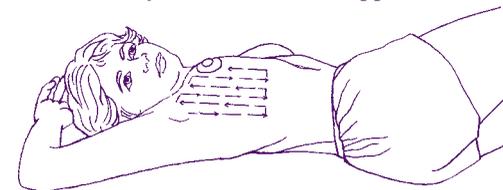
hands on hips

- ⌘ Take notice of any staining on your night clothes or bra from your nipples, especially if only on one side.

- ⌘ **If things change/look different you should call your doctor or nurse right away.**

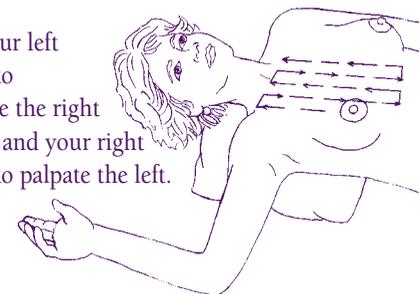
Lie down to feel your breasts:

Side-lying Position: Lie on the opposite side of the breast to be examined with your shoulder and hip facing the wall. Rotate just the shoulder (on the same side as the breast to be examined) back to the flat surface. Put the back of your hand on your forehead. Use this position to examine the outer half of your breast to the nipple.



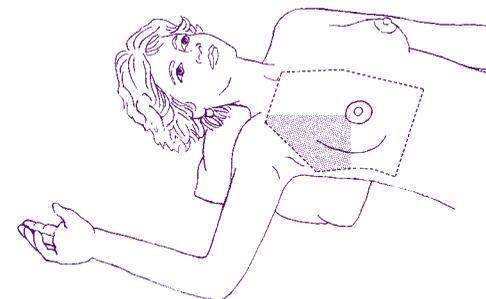
Flat position: When you get to the nipple, lie flat on your back with your arm at a 90° angle to examine the other half of the breast.

- ⌘ Use your left hand to palpate the right breast and your right hand to palpate the left.



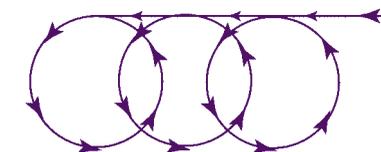
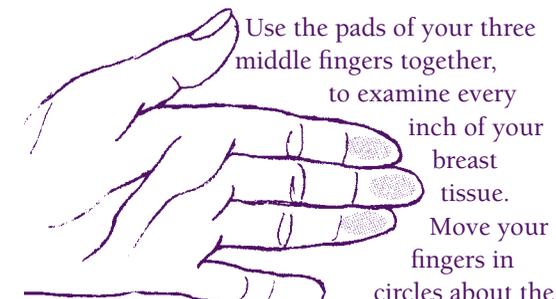
2 Perimeter (Where to Feel)

The exam area has five sides starting in your armpit down the imaginary **seam of your blouse**, across your **braline**, up your **breast bone**, across your **collarbone** and **back to your armpit**. Most breast cancers are found in the upper outer area of the breast (shaded area).



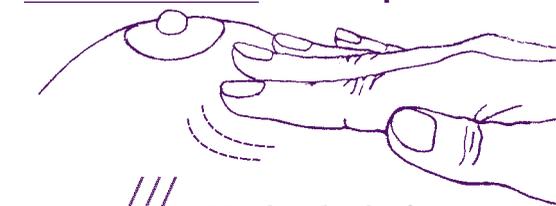
3 Palpation with Pads of Fingers (How to Feel)

Use the pads of your three middle fingers together, to examine every inch of your breast tissue. Move your fingers in circles about the size of a dime.



- ⌘ Do not lift your fingers from your breast between palpations. You can use powder to help your fingers slide from one spot to the next.

4 Pressure (How Deep to Feel)



Use three levels of pressure for each palpation, from light to deep, to examine the full thickness of your breast tissue. Using pressure is important because the breast is not flat. You need to feel all the way through the tissue to your ribs.