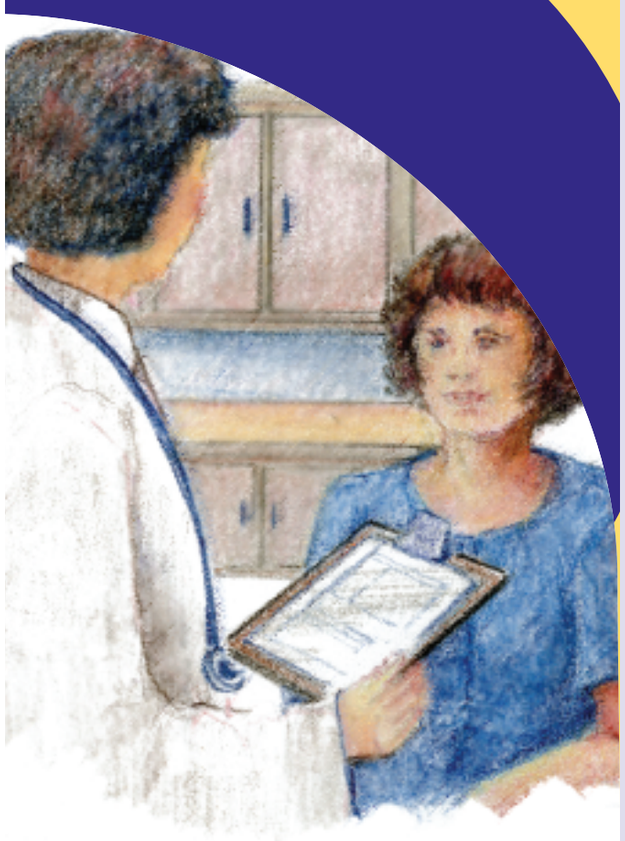
If you are a woman over age 40,
call 1 (800) 511-2300,
Monday - Friday
to find out if you qualify for a free Clinical Breast Exam and Mammogram.

Cancer Detection Programs:
Every Woman Counts

California Department of Health Services
Professional Education Unit

July 2006

What to Expect During a Clinical Breast Exam



Women should receive a Clinical Breast Exam by a doctor or nurse every year.

- The exam is done in a private room.
- You will need to remove all clothing above your waist.
- You may want someone else to be in the room with you for the exam. Ask one of the female staff, a friend or family member to be present.

Talking with your doctor or nurse about your breast screening is an important part of your exam.

Your doctor or nurse will talk with you about the following:

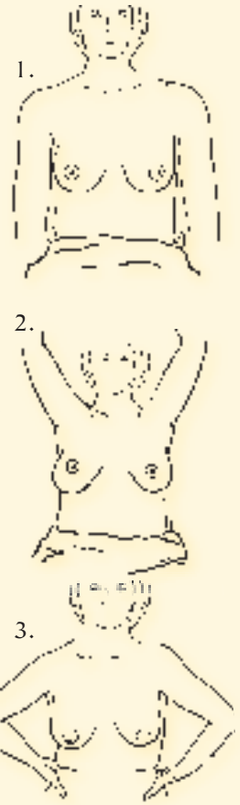
- Your health history and risk for breast cancer.
- Questions or concerns about your breasts.
- Each step of the exam.
- Your comfort during the exam.

Talk with your doctor or nurse about:

- The areas of your breast that don't look or feel right to you.
- Information or words that you do not understand.
- Screenings or tests that you may need.
- Written materials about breast self-exam (BSE) and mammograms.

DURING YOUR CLINICAL BREAST EXAM

While sitting up:



- The doctor or nurse looks at your breasts to see if there are any changes in the shape, skin or the nipple. You may be asked to put your arms in the following positions:
  1. arms at your side
  2. arms above head
  3. hands on hips.

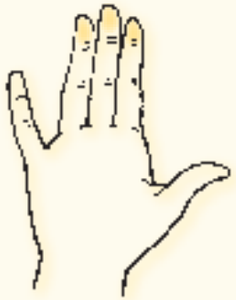
- The doctor or nurse checks the lymph nodes above and below your collarbone and in your underarm areas for any swelling.

While lying down:

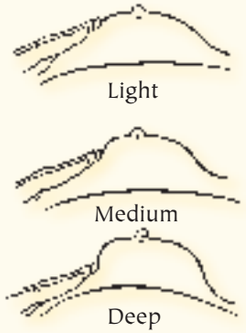
- The doctor or nurse does a clinical breast exam (CBE) following a pattern. He or she will move their hand up and down your breast in rows (like mowing the lawn). They will cover every part of each breast including the nipple.

- Your breast tissue covers a large area – from your collarbone to the bra line and from the breastbone to the middle of your underarm.

- The doctor or nurse will feel your breast tissue by using the pads of their three middle fingers.



- Lumps can grow anywhere in your breast. So your doctor or nurse will need to use light, medium and deep pressure to feel all your breast tissue. The deep pressure can hurt, but it is very important for a complete exam.



End of the exam:

- Ask your doctor or nurse to let you feel your own breast tissue. This way you can learn what is normal for you.

- You and your doctor or nurse will talk about a plan of regular screening and follow-up that is best for you.

THREE STEPS TO COMPLETE BREAST SCREENING

Finding breast cancer early will give you more choices for fighting it. Follow a regular breast screening program that includes:

STEP 1 **A Clinical Breast Exam** (CBE) by a doctor or nurse as shown in this brochure. *Every 3 years starting at age 20 to age 40. Every year at age 40 and older.*

STEP 2 **A Mammogram** (an x-ray of the breast) ordered by your doctor or nurse. *Every year starting at age 40 and older.*

STEP 3 **A Breast Self-Exam (BSE)** that you can do yourself at the same time each month. Ask your doctor or nurse to show you how to do the exam.