

HEALTH TIPS

Make Health Happen

Breast health

WHY SHOULD I CHECK MY BREASTS?

Checking your breasts each month for lumps or other changes can help keep your breasts healthy. The earlier breast cancer is found, the easier it is to treat. If not found early, the cancer can spread to other parts of the body.

When should I start doing breast self-exams?

It's best to start by age 20. Try doing your breast self-exam every month on the same day. A week after the start of your menstrual period is the best time. If you get into the habit, you will be able to detect changes.



How do I do a breast self-exam?

Here are some tips on doing a breast self-exam. Your doctor can give you advice, too.

- Lie down on your back and place your right arm above your head.
- Use the finger pads of the three middle fingers of your left hand to feel for lumps in your right breast.
- Use a dime-sized circular motion to feel the tissue. First press lightly, then press a little harder, then press firmly. Now move to a new spot, overlapping the last.
- Check the entire breast by moving in an up-and-down pattern.
- Repeat the exam on your left breast.

What should I be looking for?

Look at your breasts in a mirror to check for:

- Any new lump in your breast
- Liquid coming from your nipple that is bloody or dark-colored
- Nipple pain or the nipple going inward
- Any thick areas on your breast
- Any change in the shape of your breast
- Any redness of the nipple or breast skin

Most lumps are not cancerous. Only your doctor can tell for sure. See your doctor right away if you find any of the signs listed above.

Breast health checklist

Check the one you'll do first.

- I will examine my breasts every month.
- I will get a clinical breast exam by my doctor at least once a year.
- I will talk to my doctor about when to start having a yearly mammogram.
- I will talk to my mother, daughters and friends about breast health.

For information about breast health, visit www.womenshealth.gov.

Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website: womenshealth.gov. (Accessed on September 4, 2013.)



www.unicare.com

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Customer Care Center: 1-800-782-0095 (TTY 1-866-378-1634)

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