

# *Mammography* AND CLINICAL BREAST EXAMS



**WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BREAST CANCER**  
**HOW TO DO A BREAST SELF-EXAM**



*Joy to Life*

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**EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES**



*As a woman,*

you face many special concerns that call for heightened awareness about your health. This is especially true for breast care.

Breast cancer is today's second leading cause of cancer death in American women (lung cancer is the first). While research continues to seek ways to prevent, detect, and treat this disease, it is essential for you to stay informed so that you can make smart decisions about your health.

By reading these suggestions and working with your healthcare professional, you will be taking important steps to finding breast problems early, when they can be treated most successfully.

### **MAKE BREAST HEALTH AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR LIFE**

Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in American women, after skin cancer. A woman's chance of surviving breast cancer is greatly improved with early detection and treatment. You owe it to your family, your friends, and to yourself to do all you can to stay informed and have screenings on time.

**THE BEST PROTECTION IS EARLY DETECTION.**



## EARLY DETECTION IS THE BEST PROTECTION

Take control of your breast health by following the American Cancer Society's breast cancer screening guidelines:

**AGE 40 & OVER** Mammogram and Clinical Breast Exam yearly.

**AGE 20 & 30s** Clinical Breast Exam every 3 years.

**STARTING IN 20s** Consult your healthcare professional at the time of your Clinical Breast Exam to determine how often you should do a breast self-exam.

*Note: If you think you are at high risk for breast cancer, talk with your doctor about your history and what options are right for you.*

### WHAT IS YOUR RISK OF BREAST CANCER?

Some women with one or more risk factors never get breast cancer. Most women who get breast cancer have no apparent risk factors. However, the genetic and lifestyle risk factors below can increase a person's chances of having the disease.

**Please check the following statements that apply to you.**



- I am a woman
- I am over 50 years old
- I am Caucasian
- I have had a previous breast cancer or precancerous condition
- I have a close blood relative with breast and/or ovarian cancer or a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation
- I have a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation
- I had chest area radiation between ages of 10 and 30
- I started my menstrual period before age 12 or reached menopause after age 50
- I never had children or had my first child after age 30
- I am overweight
- I have used hormone replacement therapy for 5 years or more
- I have one or more drinks of alcohol a day

The more boxes you have checked, the greater your risk of developing breast cancer. Discuss these and any other risk factors with your healthcare professional.



## *Mammography* CAN BE LIFESAVING

For most women, mammography provides the best way to find breast cancer at an early stage, when treatment is usually the most highly successful. A mammogram is a low-dose X-ray of your breasts that can detect many changes that are too small or too deep to feel. Mammograms are considered safe, quick, and relatively painless. They are available through a doctor's orders or, in some cases, a self-referral. Annual mammograms are recommended for all women aged 40 and over.

### TIPS FOR A BETTER MAMMOGRAM

- On the day of your mammogram, do not use any deodorant, lotion, cream, or powder on your underarms or breasts. These could interfere with a clear mammogram.
- If your breasts get tender around the time of your period, schedule your mammogram for one week after your period ends.
- If you have had mammograms at another facility have previous mammograms available to the radiologist at your current exam. Also bring a list of places and dates of earlier mammograms, as well as biopsies and other breast treatments you received.
- Before the exam, describe any breast symptoms or problems you are having.
- If you do not hear from your healthcare professional within 10 days, consult him or her.
- Be sure that the mammography center you use is accredited by the American College of Radiology.



## MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT MAMMOGRAPHY

**MYTH** "I don't need a mammogram unless my healthcare professional says I do."

**FACT** Although most healthcare professionals remember to refer women for mammograms, you shouldn't wait for one to suggest it. The American Cancer Society recommends yearly mammograms for women age 40 and older and immediate consultation with your doctor if you detect a change in your breasts.

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**MYTH** "I've had a normal mammogram so I don't need another."

**FACT** Once is not enough. Every woman age 40 or older should have an annual mammogram. Depending on how rapidly a tumor grows, mammography can detect it as much as two years before a manual exam can.

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**MYTH** "Mammography gives off unsafe levels of radiation."

**FACT** The radiation given off from modern mammography equipment is considered so low that it poses no risk of triggering cancer in healthy cells.

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**MYTH** "I don't need a mammogram if I don't have any symptoms or problems."

**FACT** Mammograms can detect breast cancers when they are very small and long before they cause symptoms or problems.

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**MYTH** "Having a mammogram is very painful."

**FACT** You won't feel anything when the actual mammogram X-ray is taken. However, in order to get a sharper image, your breast tissue must be flattened against a special device. A few women find the flattening uncomfortable, while others have no complaints. As suggested earlier, if your breasts get tender around the time of your period, schedule your mammogram for another time of month.

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**MYTH** "If a mammogram does detect a problem, it's too late to do anything about it."

**FACT** Mammograms can detect most breast cancers very early, giving you more treatment options and greater chances of survival. Mammograms could save your life!



## HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT BREAST CARE?

Answer True or False

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- 1 Healthy breasts can feel lumpy.
- 2 Changes to the outside of a breast may indicate a problem within it.
- 3 If I find a lump in my breast and the mammogram results are negative, it's nothing to worry about.
- 4 As you age, your risk of developing breast cancer increases.
- 5 All breast lumps are cancerous.
- 6 Breast cancer is common in women with a family history of breast cancer.
- 7 The composition of a healthy breast changes after menopause.
- 8 Women without breast cancer symptoms don't need mammograms.
- 9 Women with small breasts are less likely to have breast cancer.
- 10 Breast self-exams can serve a helpful function.
- 11 A breast injury can cause breast cancer.
- 12 The earlier breast cancer is found, the better the chances for successful treatment.

### ANSWERS

- 1 **True** Lumpiness is not a cause for concern as long as it is normal for your breasts.
- 2 **True** Dimpling, puckering, flattening, indentations and other changes seen on the outside of the breast may indicate a problem within the breast.
- 3 **False** A small percentage of breast cancers are not detected by mammography. Any lump in your breast requires further evaluation.
- 4 **True** Most breast cancers occur in women over the age of 50, and the risk is especially high in women over 60.
- 5 **False** More than 80 percent of all breast lumps discovered are not cancerous.
- 6 **False** Although a family history of breast cancer puts you at higher risk, 80 percent of the women diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history of the disease.
- 7 **True** Following menopause, the amount of fibrous tissue in a woman's breasts decreases and the amount of fatty tissue increases.
- 8 **False** In its earliest and most treatable stage, breast cancer often causes no symptoms. It's critical that women, including those with no symptoms, follow through with mammograms and clinical breast exams on schedule.
- 9 **False** Breast size has nothing to do with a woman's vulnerability to cancer or other breast disease.
- 10 **True** Although the American Cancer Society recommends BSE as an option for women starting in their 20s, many experts encourage doing BSE on a monthly basis. In this way, women can learn how their breasts normally look and feel so any changes can be quickly detected and reported.
- 11 **False** There is no evidence that an injury to the breast will cause cancer. An injury may, however, result in certain conditions that can appear as lumps. An injury can also make you more aware of your breasts and more likely to notice any unusual changes.
- 12 **True** Your best plan for early detection of breast cancer is mammograms, clinical breast exams on schedule and making an informed choice about whether or how often to do breast self-exam to increase awareness of the normal "landscape" of your breasts.



## *Clinical* BREAST EXAM

Your clinical breast exam (CBE) is a physical examination of your breasts by a healthcare professional. During this exam, the healthcare professional will check your breasts, often using the same finger-touch technique that is used for breast self-exams. If you are 40 or over, it is preferable to schedule your annual CBE shortly before your annual mammogram so that any suspicious areas found during your CBE can be reviewed in the mammogram. If you are in your 20s or 30s, it is preferable to have a clinical breast exam every 3 years.

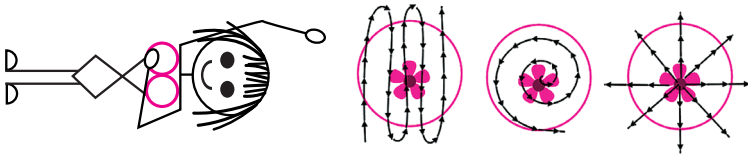
If you choose to do breast self-exam, your CBE is a good time to get instructions on how to examine your breasts correctly. Your healthcare professional can help you do your own breast self-exam or demonstrate the proper technique on a breast form. This is also your opportunity to ask any questions or discuss any concerns you may have about your breast health.



## BREAST SELF-EXAM

Breast self-exam (BSE) can help you become familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel. This knowledge may help you identify any breast changes that should be promptly reported to your healthcare professional. The American Cancer Society considers BSE an option for women starting in their 20s. Many experts recommend that women do a monthly BSE. The following steps will help you do BSE correctly.

**LYING DOWN** This is the most effective way to feel your breast tissue. To examine your right breast, lie on your back and put your right arm behind your head.



### CHOOSE ONE OF THE THREE PATTERNS SHOWN: UP & DOWN, CIRCLE, WEDGE

With the finger pads (not fingertips) of the three middle fingers of your left hand, apply three levels of pressure (light, then medium, then firm) in overlapping dime-sized circular motions to feel your entire breast tissue, including your underarms. Check for lumps or thickenings. Repeat the exam on your left breast, using the finger pads of your right hand.



#### STANDING OR SITTING

Examine each underarm with your arm only slightly raised.



#### IN FRONT OF A MIRROR

Stand with your hands firmly pressing down on your hips and look for changes in the shape, size or skin texture of your breasts. Check your nipples for changes, including unusual discharge.



#### IN THE SHOWER

Examine your breasts using the same pattern and technique as in the lying down exam. Use your right hand for your left breast, left hand for your right breast.

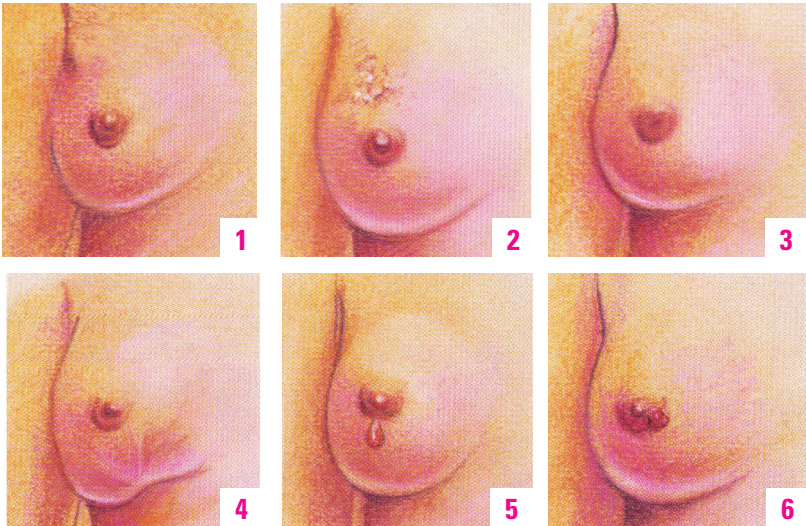
**ONLINE** To learn how to perform a proper self-exam from Dr. Pamela Strickland of Montgomery, Alabama visit [joytolifefoundation.org/breast-health](http://joytolifefoundation.org/breast-health).

**REPORT ANY CHANGES OR IRREGULARITIES TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL AT ONCE.**

*\*The American Cancer Society recommends the up and down pattern.*



## BREAST CHANGES THAT NEED ATTENTION



- 1** Distinct single lumps that are either hard or soft.
- 2** Changes in skin texture or color including redness, "orange peel" (pebbly) skin, thickening, roughness, or puckering.
- 3** Changes in nipple location or shape.
- 4** Changes in breast shape such as dimpling (depression), bulges, or flattening.
- 5** Bloody or cloudy nipple discharge.
- 6** Breast sores that don't heal.



## BREAST CANCER IN MEN

Women are not the only ones at risk, although breast cancer is less common among men. The lifetime risk for breast cancer for a man is about 1 in 1,000. Men have a similar outlook for survival as women in the same state of breast cancer. However, men often don't tell their doctors about a breast lump until it's become large and the cancer more advanced.

**Men should promptly report any breast changes to their doctors.**



## NOT ALL BREAST LUMPS ARE CANCEROUS

Most breast lumps are benign or harmless. However, all should be checked. Here are some of the more common breast conditions that may cause lumps.



### FIBROCYSTIC TISSUE

The most common cause of breast lumps in women under age 50. The condition is not fully understood, but it is thought to be a reaction to overactive hormones. This causes the breast's fibrous tissue to increase, and several cysts and/or clumps of fibrous tissue to form within the breast.



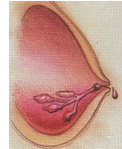
### CYSTS

Single or multiple fluid-filled sacs that are not accompanied by an increase in fibrous tissue. This is a type of fibrocystic tissue.



### FIBROADENOMAS

Single, solid tumors made of fibrous and glandular tissue. They usually move when felt. They are found most often in women between the ages of 18 and 35.



### PAPILLOMAS

Small, wart-like lumps in the mammary ducts near the nipple. They can cause the nipple to discharge a clear or bloody fluid.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BREAST CANCER

Cancer is a general term for more than 100 diseases in which abnormal cells multiply uncontrollably. Breast cancer, in particular, is a term for several cancers that begin in the breast. The most common form of breast cancer is called ductal carcinoma and begins in the lining of the ducts.

In the United States, breast cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer in women. The good news is that with early detection and treatment, the majority of women diagnosed with breast cancer will be alive and well more than five years after their diagnosis.

Some of the methods currently used to treat breast cancer include:

- Several types of surgery, ranging from a lumpectomy, which removes only the tumor, to a radical mastectomy, which removes the breast, lymph nodes, and chest muscle
- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Hormone therapy

### The treatment or combination of treatments recommended depends on five factors:

1 The size of the tumor | 2 How much the cancer has spread | 3 Lab test results | 4 The woman's age and medical history | 5 What she and her doctor decide are the best treatment options for her

Your best defense in the fight against breast cancer is following a healthy lifestyle and the early detection screening guidelines in this booklet.

*\*Information compiled from the American Cancer Society materials.*



## 10 Guidelines FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

While doctors search for better ways to fight breast cancer with improved detection methods and treatments, they also continue to seek ways to prevent the disease.

Some risk factors are at present uncontrollable. This includes certain genes that place 5 to 10 percent of women at extreme risk. Lifestyle risks are not totally understood nor are studies conclusive. However, by adopting the following 10 healthy lifestyle habits, you will be doing the best you can to prevent breast cancer, as well as to lower your risk of other cancers, heart disease, and a wide range of other serious conditions.

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Maintain a healthy weight.

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Eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables daily, make your grains whole grains, cut down on red meat. Consider reducing fat in your diet as well—especially saturated fat.

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Get plenty of exercise. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week. Walking is a great all-around activity.

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Limit your drinking to occasional or no alcohol. Drinking increases the risk for several types of cancers, including breast cancer.

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Decide carefully before starting or continuing hormone replacement therapy. Long-term use of HRT after menopause may increase breast cancer risk. Discuss your options with your doctor.

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Learn about medical conditions that you may have or be at risk for developing. Control chronic health conditions. Discuss with both sides of your family and your healthcare professional.

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Schedule your health checkups on time.

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Avoid tobacco products and secondhand smoke. If you smoke, quit today.

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Practice stress management—your emotions can affect your physical health.

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Get enough sleep each night. Sleep helps to recharge your immune system as well as give you the energy you need each day.

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*Note: According to the American Cancer Society, many studies show that breastfeeding lowers breast cancer risk. If you are pregnant, you may want to discuss this with your doctor.*

## APPOINTMENT TRACKER

Use the space below to record your clinical breast exams, mammograms, or other appointments related to your breast health.

Learn more at [joytolifefoundation.org/breast-health](http://joytolifefoundation.org/breast-health).

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor/Facility \_\_\_\_\_

Procedure/Purpose \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor/Facility \_\_\_\_\_

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# SWEET HOME



LIVE HERE. ♥ GIVE HERE.



**FIGHT BREAST CANCER RIGHT HERE IN ALABAMA. PURCHASE THE ORIGINAL PINK PLATE FOR YOUR CAR OR MOTORCYCLE. BUY THE TRASH CAN. READ THE MAGAZINE AT JOYTOLIFEMAGAZINE.ORG. REGISTER FOR THE WALK OF LIFE.**