Breast Self-Exam

HOW TO PERFORM MONTHLY EXAMS

The Show Me Healthy Women program is a joint project of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Grant Agreement #NU58DP007130. Alternate forms of this publication for persons with disabilities may be obtained by contacting Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at 866-726-9926. Hearing and speech impaired citizens can dial 711.

BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

Free Cancer Screenings

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?
You may qualify for Show Me Healthy Women if you:

- Are age 35-64.
- Are uninsured or underinsured.
- Meet income guidelines.

Missouri's Department of Health & Senior Services
920 Wildwood Drive
PO Box 570
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570
Health.Mo.Gov
CANCER INFORMATION SERVICE
866-726-9926

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Why do a breast self-exam?
There are many good reasons for doing a breast self-examination each month. It is easy to do. When you get to know how your breasts normally feel, you may be able to feel a change. With practice, it should take about 15 minutes each month. Early detection is the key to successful treatment and cure.

When to do a breast self-exam?
The best time to do breast self-examination is right after your period, when breasts are not tender or swollen. Most breast lumps are found by women themselves or their partners. Any lump or change should be checked by a doctor.

Early detection is your best protection!

Missouri's Breast Self-Examination

Palpation
Use the pads of the middle three fingers of each hand to examine the breast on the opposite side - do not use fingertips - keep fingers together.

- Move fingers in dime-size circles using the three levels of pressure in each spot.
- Keep fingers, knuckles, and wrists straight.
- "Walk and slide" finger pads along so no breast tissue is missed.

Pressure
Lumps can occur at any depth. Use three levels of pressure to examine each spot thoroughly:

- Light - Use very light pressure on the first dime-size circle. Pressure should be just enough to move the skin without disturbing the tissue underneath. Pressing too hard at first could cause a lump to move out of the way.
- Medium - On the second circle, use medium pressure to feel for changes below the surface to mid-level of the breast tissue.
- Deep - On the third circle, check for lumps deep in the breast tissue. Press as firmly as you can without discomfort. The goal is to feel the ribs with the deep pressure.

Position
Position 1: Spread the breast tissue evenly over rib cage.

- Turn on your side with knees bent. Lean shoulder back toward the outside (away from your hip) and put your hand on your forehead. Place a pillow under your lower back to make it more comfortable.
- You are in the right position when your nipple seems to "float" at the top of the mound of your breast tissue.

- Position 2: When search pattern reaches the nipple, hold fingers in place on the nipple and roll back into a position flat on your back.
- The arm on the side being examined should now be extended directly away from the body (at a right angle).

Pattern
Use a vertical strip pattern to check the entire breast area.

- Imagine mowing a lawn with straight, vertical, overlapping rows. When you reach the end of each row, move over about one finger width and start the next row.
- Once you start, do not lift fingers from the breast area.

Check Your Lymph Nodes

Lymph nodes drain breast tissue
The lymph nodes that drain the breast tissue are located in three areas:
- Above your collar bone
- Below your collar bone
- In the armpit

You will want to know if any nodes are enlarged, movable or unmovable.

Palpation
View in a mirror, looking at your front and both sides in each position below

Lying Down

Perform Breast Self-Exam Every Month.

Qué hacer si tiene senos hinchados

- Palpación

- Presión

- Pauta

- Comprobar los nódulos linfáticos

- ¿Por qué hacer un auto-examen de senos?

- Cuando hacer un auto-examen de senos

- ¿Qué hacer si tiene senos hinchados?