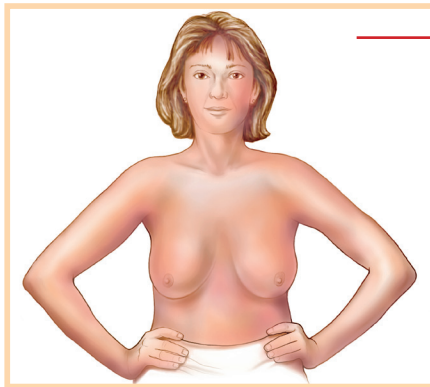


patient education **Fact Sheet**

PFS002 Breast Self-Exam MAY 2012

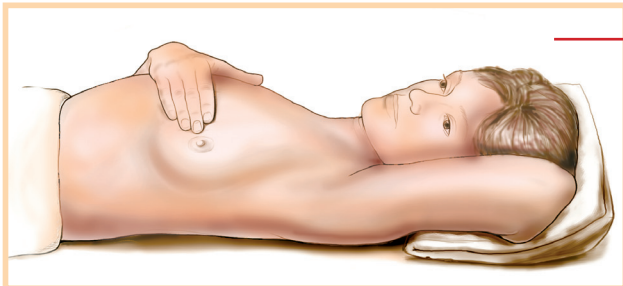
The Breast Self-Exam

Breast self-awareness means being aware of how your breasts normally look and feel and reporting any changes to your health care provider. One way to learn what is normal for your breasts and to find any problems is to do a breast self-exam.



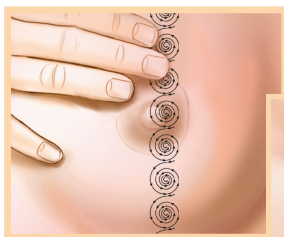
Looking

The self-exam should always be done in good light. Stand in front of a mirror. Place your hands on your hips, pressing down firmly. Look for dimpling, puckering, redness or scaliness of the breast skin or nipple, discharge from the nipples, changes in breast size or shape, or a nipple that has pulled inward or to the side.

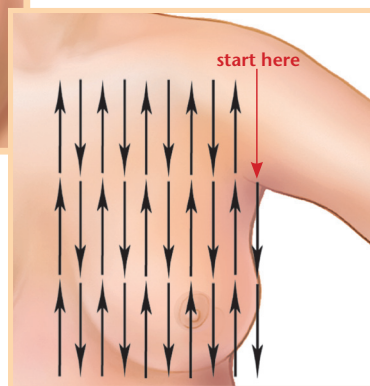


Feeling

Lie flat on your back. To examine the left breast, place your left hand behind your head. With your right hand, starting in the underarm area, use the pads (not the tips) of your three middle fingers to feel your left breast.



Use overlapping dime-sized circular motions of the pads of the fingers to feel the breast tissue. Use three different levels of pressure to feel the breast tissue: light, medium, and firm pressure.



Slowly move your fingers down until you feel your rib cage. Move your fingers closer toward your nipple and go slowly back up to the collar bone in your neck, using the same dime-sized circular motions with your three middle fingers and three levels of pressure. Continue this up-and-down pattern all the way across your breast, from the underarm area to the middle of your chest.

Now examine the right breast. Place your right hand behind your head. Starting in the underarm area, use the middle three fingers of your left hand to feel the right breast.

Don't Forget

- ▶ When feeling in the underarm area, sit or stand and raise your arm slightly. Do not raise your arm over your head.
- ▶ Report any swelling or lump to your health care provider promptly.

PFS002: Designed as an aid to patients, this document sets forth current information and opinions related to women's health. The information does not dictate an exclusive course of treatment or procedure to be followed and should not be construed as excluding other acceptable methods of practice. Variations, taking into account the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to the institution or type of practice, may be appropriate.

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