



Know the Symptoms

A GUIDE AND CHECKLIST
TO BREAST CANCER
SYMPTOMS

Many of the symptoms of breast cancer are invisible and not noticeable without a professional screening like a mammogram or ultrasound. There are other symptoms, however, that can be felt or observed when you are being proactive about your breast health.

This guide will help you know what to look for and help you take note of the important information to share with your healthcare provider to guide him or her in their professional evaluation of your breast health and required screenings.

BREAST SELF-AWARENESS

Breast self-awareness can help you become familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel. Knowing this will help you identify any changes in your breasts that should be reported to your health care professional promptly. If you find a lump, schedule an appointment with your doctor, but don't panic – most lumps are not cancer.

Changes to look for include:

- A lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm area
- A change in the size or shape of the breast
- Dimpling or puckering in the skin of the breast
- A nipple turned inward into the breast
- Discharge (fluid) from the nipple
- Scaly, red, or swollen skin on the breast, nipple, or areola (the dark area of skin at the center of the breast)

You should see your healthcare provider about any of these symptoms. Often these symptoms are not due to cancer, but if you notice any changes in your body, tell your healthcare provider immediately so that the problems can be diagnosed and treated.

HOW TO PERFORM A BREAST SELF-EXAM

1) IN THE SHOWER



With the pads/flats of your 3 middle fingers, check the entire breast and armpit area pressing down with light, medium, and firm pressure. Check both breasts each month feeling for any lump, thickening, hardened knot, or any other breast changes.

2) IN FRONT OF A MIRROR



Visually inspect your breasts with your arms at your sides. Next, raise your arms high overhead.

Look for any changes in the contour, any swelling, or dimpling of the skin, or changes in the nipples. Next, rest your palms on your hips and press firmly to flex your chest muscles. Left and right breasts will not exactly match—few women's breasts do, so look for any dimpling, puckering, or changes, particularly on one side.

3) LYING DOWN



With the pads/flats of your 3 middle fingers, check the entire breast and armpit area pressing down with light, medium, and firm pressure. Check both breasts each month feeling for any lump, thickening, hardened knot, or any other breast changes.

Use light, medium, and firm pressure. Squeeze the nipple; check for discharge and lumps. Repeat these steps for your left breast.

BREAST CANCER SYMPTOM CHECKLIST

Complete this checklist if you have noticed any changes in your breast. This will help you discuss the changes with your healthcare provider.

I have noticed these breast changes:

- A lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm area

Left Breast

Right Breast

Date first noticed:

- A change in the size or shape of the breast

Left Breast

Right Breast

Date first noticed:

- Dimpling or puckering in the skin of the breast
 Left Breast Right Breast
 Date first noticed:
- A nipple turned inward into the breast
 Left Breast Right Breast
 Date first noticed:
- Discharge (fluid) from the nipple
 Left Breast Right Breast
 Date first noticed:
- Scaly, red, or swollen skin on the breast, nipple, or areola (the dark area of skin at the center of the breast)
 Left Breast Right Breast
 Date first noticed:
- Other changes:

If you have noticed any changes in your breasts, use this worksheet to describe what has happened. This will help you discuss these changes with your healthcare provider.

These are the breast changes or problems I have noticed:

This is what the breast change looks or feels like:

Is the lump hard or soft?

Does your breast feel tender or swollen?

How big is the lump?

What color is the nipple discharge?

This is where the breast change is:

What part of the breast feels different?

Do both breasts feel different or only one?

This is when I first noticed the breast change:

Since then, this is the change I've noticed:

Has it stayed the same or gotten worse?

I've had the following breast problems in the past:

These are the breast exams and tests that I have had:

My last mammogram was on this date:

My last menstrual period began on this date:

Right now, I:

Have breast implants

Am pregnant

Am breastfeeding

I've had the following type(s) of cancer before: