

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



COUNTY MICHIGAN
HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

oakgov.com/health

Breast Self- Examination (BSE)

What is Breast Self-Examination (BSE)?

A simple routine of checking your own breasts to feel for any abnormalities. Knowing how your breasts normally feel will help you to notice future changes.

Why Examine my Breasts?

To look for any changes in your breasts such as:

- A lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm area
- A change in the size or shape of the breast
- A discharge from the nipple
- A change in the color or feel of the skin of the breast, areola, or nipple (dimpled, puckered, or scaly)

Pain or tenderness in a specific area of the breast

When do I Examine my Breasts?

Monthly, starting at 20 years of age. The best time to do breast self-examination is right after your period, when breasts are not tender or swollen. If you do not have regular periods or sometimes skip a month, perform the exam the same day every month.

How do I Examine my Breasts?

Lying Down

1. Lie down and put a pillow under your shoulder on one side. Place that same arm behind your head.
2. Use the finger pads (top of the finger) of your three middle fingers of the opposite hand to feel for lumps or thickening. Press firm enough to feel all parts of the breast.
3. Move around the breast either in a circular motion, up and down, or from the outside edge in towards the nipple. Use the same way each time you perform BSE.
4. Repeat the process on the other side.



OVER

How do I Examine my Breasts?

In Front of the Mirror

1. Standing in front of the mirror, look for changes in your breasts, such as size, shape, dimpling, swelling, or redness. You may notice that one breast is larger than the other, this is normal.
2. Look at breasts with arms at your sides and then with your arms raised high over your head. Rest palms on your hips and press down firmly to flex the chest muscles.
3. Repeat the examination of both breasts while standing, with one arm behind your head. This portion of the exam can also be done in the shower. Some breast changes can be felt more easily when the breasts are wet and soapy.

The Benefits of BSE?

By performing breast self-examination every month, you will become familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel. This will make it easier for you to notice changes in your breasts.

For more information on Breast Self-Examination, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

For additional copies, visit our website at www.oakgov.com/health.