



Step 3

⬆️ **Step 3:** Gently squeeze each nipple to check for any irregular discharge** and look for any changes*.

*Refer to *Changes to look for*.

**Some discharge can be normal. Check with your healthcare practitioner.

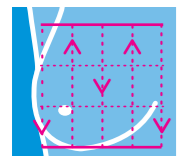
⬇️ **Step 4:** Lie down, with a pillow under the left shoulder. Feel the left breast using the pads of your fingers and press down in a circular motion with varying pressure. Check for any lumps or changes. Repeat with right breast.



Step 4



⬅️ **Feel for changes:** Choose a pattern and check your whole breast from your collarbone to bra line and from your breastbone to the center of your armpit.



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American Cancer Society guidelines for the early detection of breast cancer¹

- **Age 40 and older:** screening mammogram and breast examination by a healthcare practitioner every year.
- **Ages 20 to 39:** clinical breast examination by a healthcare practitioner every 3 years.
- **Age 20 and older:** breast self-examination every month.

Diagnosis

If a mammogram shows an abnormality, other tests including additional mammograms and ultrasound may help your doctor decide if you need to have a biopsy. A diagnosis of breast cancer can only be made with a biopsy.

Treatment

Breast cancer may be treated in a number of ways. A healthcare provider will determine the best method of treatment depending on the characteristics and stage of the cancer.

Surgery is the most common treatment for breast cancer. If the cancer is detected early, it may be treated with breast-sparing surgery, usually followed by radiation to destroy remaining cancer cells. Reconstructive surgery can be done during or after initial breast cancer surgery.

Radiation therapy uses high-energy x-rays to destroy cancer cells and shrink tumors. Radiation may be given before or after surgery.

Chemotherapy uses specialised drugs to kill cancer cells. Usually a combination of drugs is given in a pill or by injection. Your healthcare practitioner will determine whether chemotherapy should be administered.

Hormonal therapy is a treatment given if lab tests show that the breast cancer depends on the body's natural hormones to grow. If so, hormonal therapy decreases the production of certain hormones or blocks the body's natural hormones from reaching any of the remaining cancer cells.

Biologic therapy is a treatment that boosts the body's natural immune system to fight off infections and cancer. Biologic therapy is often used with radiation and chemotherapy.

References: 1. American Cancer Society: Cancer Facts and Figures 2005. Available online at www.cancer.org. 2. www.givengain.com/cgi-bin/giga.cgi?cmd=cause_dir_news_item&cause_id=1056&news_id=32023&cat_id=820. 3. www.y-me.org/Information/three_point_detection.php. Accessed March 19, 2005. 4. www.healthnewsflash.com/conditions/breast_cancer.php. Accessed November 29, 2004. 5. www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_4_2X_What_r_the_risk_factors. 6. <http://cms.komen.org/komen/AboutBreastCancer/Resources/DownloadBSECards?ssSourceNodeId=412&ssSourceSiteId=Komen>. Compiled: May 2008.

For more information about breast cancer:

www.breastcancersource.com

www.astrazeneca.co.za

Netcare Breast Care Centre
Toll-free 086 023 3233



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Your guide to
**Understanding
Breast Cancer**

Breast cancer awareness

Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women, other than skin cancers. Even though it is discussed freely on television, in magazines, and in newspapers, many women do not know the facts about breast cancer. **Why should you know the facts about breast cancer? Because it can save your life.** The key to surviving breast cancer is early detection and treatment. The early detection of breast cancer increases your chance of survival and increases treatment options.¹

The disease

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women (after lung cancer) and is the most common cancer among women, excluding non-melanoma skin cancers. Breast cancer is the leading cancer for women in South Africa, with 1 in 27 South African women diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime.²

Risk factors

Although some women are at greater risk of developing breast cancer than others, it is important to know that every woman is at risk. More than 70% of women with breast cancer had no family history of the disease.^{3,5} However, knowing the risk factors will help you and your healthcare practitioner evaluate whether you can do anything to reduce your risk.

Prevention

It is not known whether dietary changes can help to prevent the disease.

Researchers are studying a number of possible contributing preventive factors, including the role of hormonal therapies.

These studies may provide more information about the possibility of preventing breast cancer.

Known risk factors for breast cancer⁴

Age

The risk of breast cancer increases with age.

Family history

The risk increases if a mother, sister or daughter had the disease.

Breast density

The risk increases if the breasts have high proportions of lobular and ductal tissue.

Age at first pregnancy

Delivering a child after age 30 increases the risk slightly.

Oestrogen exposure

Oestrogen exposure increases the risk (for example, taking hormone replacement therapy for an extended period of time).

Radiation exposure

Radiation therapy before age 30 increases the risk, especially radiation for Hodgkin's disease.

Alcohol use

Alcohol use increases the risk slightly.



Early detection

In the early stages of breast cancer, there may be no symptoms. As the cancer grows, symptoms include a lump in the breast or underarm area, a change in breast size or shape, nipple discharge or tenderness, an inverted nipple (pulled back into the breast), ridges or pits in the breast skin (resembling an orange peel), or changes in the skin of the breast, areola, or nipple (warm, swollen, red, scaly).⁴

Mammography screening is the best tool available to detect breast cancer and can often detect a breast lump before it is large enough to be felt.⁴

Most doctors recommend screening mammograms beginning at age 40.⁴ The cost of screening is covered by most health insurance policies.

Breast examinations by a healthcare professional and monthly breast self examinations (BSE) are also important. You should become familiar with how your breasts feel, so you can notice and differences over time. If you notice differences, you should visit your doctor immediately.

Your guide to

Monthly self-examination⁶

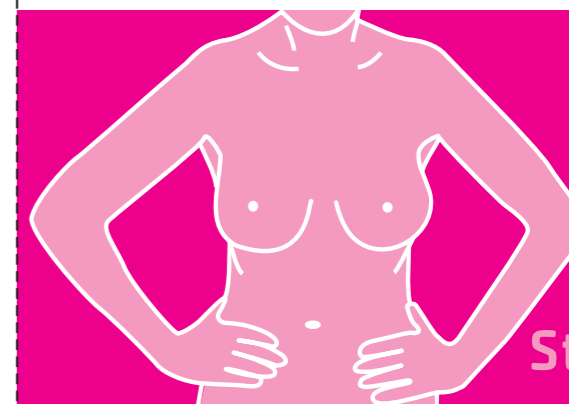
Step 1

Step 1: Stand in front of a mirror with your arms over your head and look for any changes*

*Refer to *Changes to look for*.

Note

- Do a breast exam once a month about a week after your period starts.
- If you do not have a period do it at the same time each month.
- Be sure to have a routine mammogram regularly.



Step 2

Step 2: Press your hands on your hips and tighten your chest muscles and look for any changes*

*Refer to *Changes to look for*.

*Changes to look for

- Changes in size or shape of breast or nipple.
- Dimpling, puckering or other skin changes.

Cut on the dotted line and keep

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