

# Your 10-Minute Monthly Breast Self-Exam

## The Smart Woman's 3-step Health Check

Early detection is your best defense against breast cancer

The Department of Health in the United Kingdom, recommends women to check their own breasts regularly, the best time being about one week after your period. If you find any changes in the look or feel of your breasts, contact your doctor right away.

**Follow these simple steps.**<sup>1</sup> Please know that each month, you will become more familiar with doing your self-exam.

**Step 1:** Before you shower



Lie down with a pillow under your right shoulder and place your right arm behind your head.

Use the finger pads of the three middle fingers on your left hand to feel for lumps in the right breast. It's normal for breasts to feel lumpy—over time you'll identify your own natural lumps and know if something feels different.

Press firmly enough to know how your breast feels. A firm ridge in the lower curve of each breast is normal. If you're not sure how hard to press, talk with your doctor or nurse.

Move around the breast in a circular, up and down line, or wedge pattern. Be sure to do it the same way every time, check the entire breast area and remember how your breasts feel from month to month.

Repeat the exam on your left breast, using the finger pads of your right hand—after moving the pillow to underneath your left shoulder.



**Step 2:** In the shower or bath

Repeat Step 1 standing in the shower, using soapy water. Simply place on arm behind your head as you examine your breast.



**Step 3:** In front of the mirror

Look for changes in the size and shape of your breasts—as well as the position of each nipple. Remember, it is normal for one breast to be larger than another.



**Congratulations!** You've just done something wonderful in support of your own good health

1. Medscape, "Rationale and Technique of Clinical Breast Examination", [http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/408932\\_print](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/408932_print). Accessed Sept. 29, 2011.

