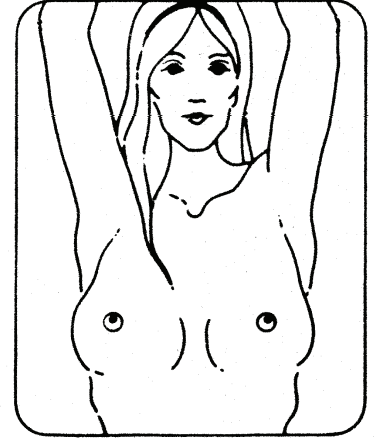


# Breast Self-Examination

Self-examine your breasts monthly, 7-10 days after the start of the menstrual period. If you have had a hysterectomy or no longer menstruate, examine your breasts on the first day of each month. Follow this procedure:

- Raise one hand up placing your hand behind your head and use the opposite hand to examine the breast.



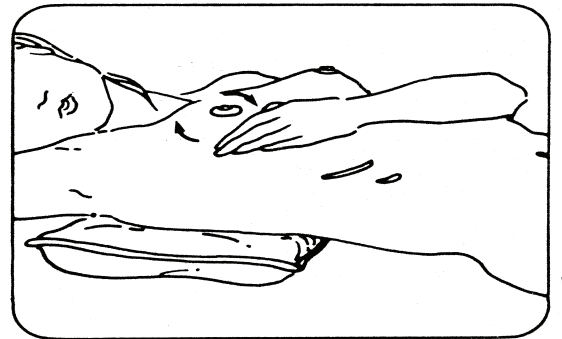
- Using the pads of the middle three fingers, feel for swollen or lumpy areas. Move the fingers in small circles to feel the tissue beneath the fingers.

- Slide the fingers to the next area to be examined. Start at the outside border of the breast and work your way around the breast and into the nipple area. Avoid lifting the fingers from the skin to be sure you cover all areas of the breast. Also check under the arm and around the collarbone for lumps or swelling.

- Examine the other breast in the same manner.

- Stand in front of a mirror and visually examine both breasts for changes in shape or contour by clasping hands behind head and press forward. Then move hands to hips and lean slightly forward. Observe for dimpling, puckering or nipple changes or spontaneous nipple discharge.

- Lie down on your back. Put a small pillow or folded towel under the shoulder of the side you're examining. Follow the above steps, as you did in the shower. You may use lotion on your fingers to increase sensation and make it easier to slide your fingers across the skin. Change sides and repeat.



## Summary

If you find anything unusual - a specific lump or firm knot, nipple retraction, skin dimpling, or any other change that does not seem normal for your breasts, contact your health care provider right away. Breast self-examination is a valuable, preventive health practice for women. Developing a regular pattern will enhance your skills and help you notice changes.