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Way to Breast Health



Your Personal Plan Against Breast Cancer

In Bangladesh, about 16% deaths are caused due to breast cancer. Any woman can be attacked with this disease, which is causing more and more deaths every year. However, most breast cancers found at an early stage are curable. The key to fighting breast cancer is early detection through routine breast self-examination, professional breast exams, and mammography screenings. It is important for every woman to know the proper way to maintain healthy breasts and protect oneself from breast cancer.

THREE STEPS TO BREAST HEALTH

1 BREAST SELF-EXAMINATION (BSE)

Look for Changes

Changes in the way your breasts look may reveal a lump that cannot be felt. A hidden lump could cause a dimpling of the breast or, in some cases, a puckered nipple. A rusty-coloured or pus-like discharge from the nipple may indicate a blocked duct or other problem.



Look for changes in your breasts while holding your arms at your side. Then, raise your arms above your head, clasp your hands behind your head, and check again.



Press your hands on your hips to flex your chest muscles. Look for changes in the appearance of your breasts.



Squeeze your nipple between your thumb and forefinger to check for discharge (a drop or two of clear or whitish fluid is normal).



Dimple



Discharge



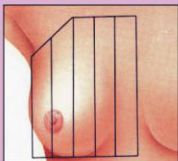
Retracted Nipple

Feel for Changes

To recognize changes in the way your breasts feel, do a thorough breast self-exam (BSE) at the same time each month. Once you know how your breasts feel normally, you can detect even minor changes. Perform BSE while lying down or while showering (hands glide easily over wet, soapy skin).



Lie down and place a pillow under the shoulder of the breast you are examining. Keep the arm on that side raised as shown.



Mentally divide the breast area into strips or circles. The area should include your collar bone to your bra line and your breast bone to your underarm.



Feel with the sensitive pads of your three middle fingers held flat.



Use small circular motions to cover each area of the strip or circle. Go over each area three times using varying degrees of pressure as shown.



1) Use light pressure to feel for changes below the skin.

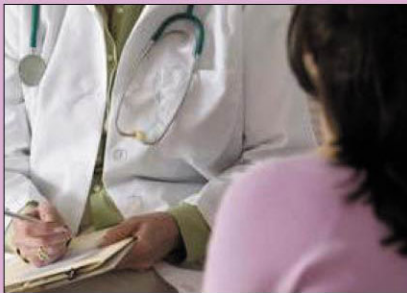


2) Use deeper pressure to feel for changes in breast tissue.

2

PROFESSIONAL BREAST EXAMS

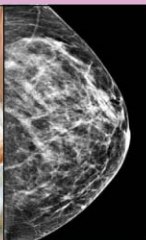
Contact your doctor immediately if you note any changes in your breasts. In addition, professional exams are recommended at least every 3 years for women between ages 20 and 39, and annually thereafter. Ask your doctor or nurse any questions you may have about breast health or self-examination techniques.



3

MAMMOGRAPHY

Mammography is a safe, low-dose x-ray technique that creates images of the inside of the breast. Mammography can detect lumps before they can be felt, so it is a particularly valuable screening procedure. Have a screening mammogram by age 40. From age 40 to 49, have one every year, then annually twice a year from age 50 on.

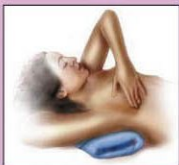


Mammogram of normal breast

YOUR BREAST HEALTH CHECK LIST

The American Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines for women 20 years old and over. Check these steps to see if you are doing all that you can for your own breast health.

- Perform a breast self-exam at the same time each month (after your period, or if menopausal, on the first day of each month).



- Look and feel for changes in the entire breast area.

- Have a breast exam by a health professional at least every three years from age 20 to 39, and annually thereafter.



- Get a screening mammogram by age 40.

- Have a mammogram every year from age 40 to 49.

- Have two yearly mammograms from age 50 on.



ABOUT RISK FACTORS

We don't know what causes breast cancer, but some factors may be linked with a higher risk of developing it. You may be at a greater risk if you are over 40, have a history of breast cancer in your family, had your first child after age 30 or never had a child, had early menstruation or late menopause, had previous abnormal breast biopsy, and received excessive radiation therapy or long-term hormone replacement therapy.

Being at risk does not mean you will develop breast cancer. The purpose of knowing your risk factors is to help devise a breast health program suited to your individual needs. Although breast cancer may not be prevented, early detection is the best means possible for ensuring prompt, successful treatment and, in many cases, total cure.

REMEMBER....

- Knowledge about early detection reduces fear and puts you in control of your health.
- Bumping, bruising and caressing do not cause cancer.
- One out of every eight women will develop breast cancer sometime during her lifetime.
- Report any changes in your breast to your health care provider.
- Most breast lumps or changes are not cancer.

Women who want to live the good life know that caring about their breast health is one of the best things they can do for themselves and their health. Taking care of your health is not only for yourself, but also for your loved ones who care about you.



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