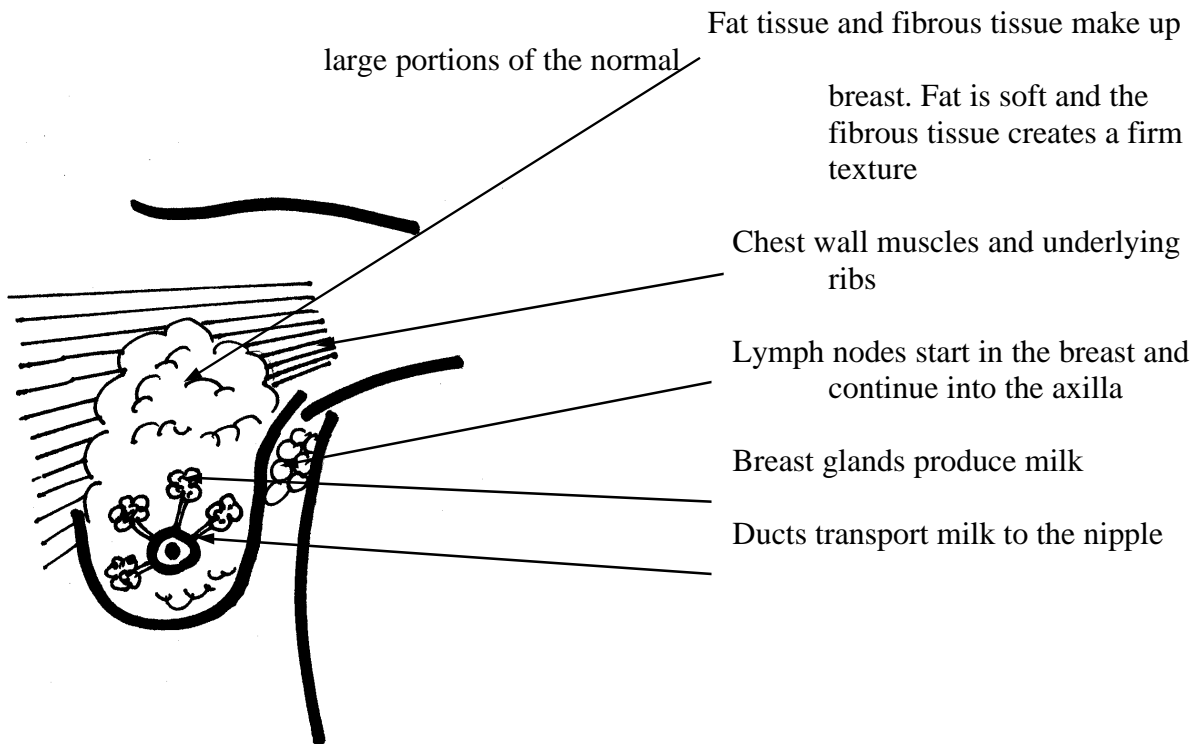


BREAST HEALTH AND EVALUATION

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in American women. It can affect women of almost any age, often occurring in the prime of life. Knowledge, not fear, will enable you to take a positive approach to breast health and care. **Please take a moment to read this important information regarding breast evaluation.**

An understanding of the normal breast and surrounding structures will help you understand what is normal breast tissue and appreciate changes that might indicate need for further evaluation.



Many factors affect the normal breast starting with the onset of puberty, pregnancy and continuing up to menopause. Your menstrual cycle, medications (birth control pills and estrogen replacement therapy) and weight gain/loss may affect the size and consistency of the breast.

BREAST EVALUATION

Breast evaluation should consist of three separate but equally important steps:

- 1) **Breast self examination**
- 2) **Professional breast exam**
- 3) **Annual mammograms**

1) **Monthly breast self examinations (BSE)** will take only several minutes each month and can be life saving. By checking your breasts every month you will become familiar with the consistency of your breasts and you will be able to detect small changes which may need further evaluation.

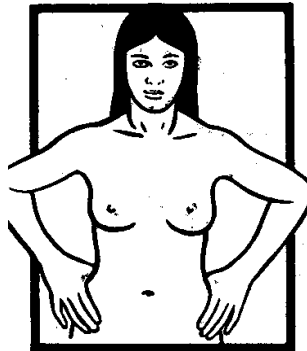
In the shower, raise one arm and examine the other breast using the flat portion of your fingers. The exam should include all portions of the breast. Look for changes from your previous exam.



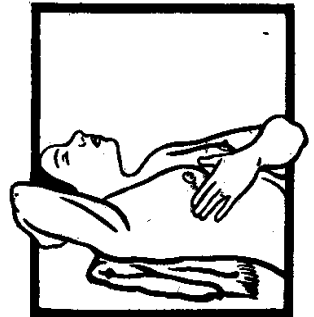
Use the right hand to examine the left breast and the left hand to examine the right. Look for thickenings, lumps or nipple drainage. Examine the upper chest and armpit areas.



Stand in front of a mirror and look for visual changes. These may include dimpling, puckering or changes in skin texture. Check first with your hands on your hips and repeat with hands behind your head. Check each nipple for drainage.



Repeat the exam while laying on your back again checking for changes in texture, lumps or changes from your last exam. A towel behind your shoulder may help.

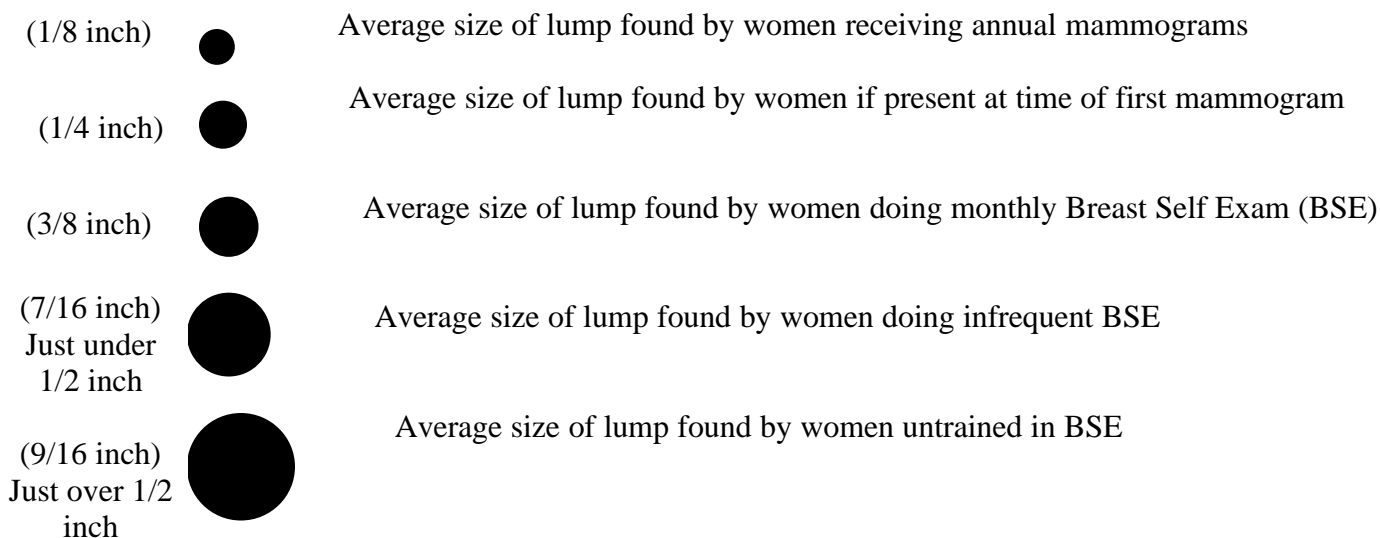


CHANGES THAT NEED FURTHER EVALUATION:

- * **Single lumps, either soft or hard**
- * **Changes in nipple shape/location**
- * **Changes in breast shape such as dimpling, flattening or bulges.**
- * **Breast sores that won't heal**
- * **Bloody or cloudy nipple discharge**
- * **Changes in skin texture or color such as thickening, roughness or puckering**

2) Professional breast examinations by your doctor are an important part of your breast evaluation. This will afford a “second opinion” of the breast consistency, texture and skin quality. It is also an excellent time to address any questions you may have about the exam technique, any changes you may be concerned about and to address the need and timing of mammography.

3) Mammography or breast x-ray will allow visualization of the deeper tissues of the breast that may escape physical detection. The mammographic techniques used today are safe and relatively painless. The mammogram results should be reviewed both by an experienced radiologist and your regular doctor.



BREAST SCREENING SCHEDULE*

Age 20-39: Monthly BSE
Professional examination every 3 years

Age 40+: Monthly BSE
Annual Professional examination
Annual Mammogram

*American Cancer Society recommendations

These recommendations may change depending on your unique situation including family history of breast cancer.

The combination of BSE, Professional examination and mammography is very effective in the evaluation of breast masses. It is important to remember that *not all breast lumps are cancer*. It is equally important to evaluate *all* breast lumps.