

Know Yourself, Protect Yourself:

The Importance of Breast Self-Exams



Early detection saves lives.

Breast self-exams are an important step in getting to know what's normal for your body. When you know your baseline, you're more likely to notice any changes early and talk to your healthcare provider.

How to Perform a Self-Exam at Home

1. Look in the mirror

- Stand with your shoulders straight and arms on your hips.
- Check for any changes in size, shape, or color.
- Look for swelling, dimpling, redness, or any skin changes.

2. Raise your arms

- Look for the same changes with your arms lifted.
- Check that both breasts move evenly when you raise them.

3. Feel while lying down

- Use your right hand to check your left breast and vice versa.
- Use a circular motion, about the size of a quarter, covering the whole breast from top to bottom and side to side.
- Don't forget the area under your arm and up to your collarbone.

4. Feel while standing or in the shower

- Many find this easiest when the skin is wet and slippery.
- Use the same circular motions and pressure levels.



When to Do It

Try to perform your self-exam once a month, about a week after your period ends.

If you don't menstruate, pick the same day each month — and set a reminder!

If You Notice a Change

Don't panic — most breast changes are not cancer.

Still, it's important to contact your healthcare provider to check any new lumps, pain, or skin changes.

For more information on Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Breast Self-Exams, visit:
nationalbreastcancer.org/breast-self-exam/



County of Morris
Department of Law & Public Safety
Division of Public Health
P.O. Box 900
Morristown, NJ 07963-0900
(973) 631-5184



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.