

# Breast Self-Exam

Each time you do a breast self-exam (BSE) you become better at it, and learn how your breasts normally feel. Monthly exams will help you quickly identify any changes in your breast. The best time to do a BSE is seven to ten days after your menstrual cycle begins, when the breasts are not as swollen, and changes are easier to notice, or on the same day of the month if you are no longer menstruating.

- 1** Stand in front of a mirror and inspect both breasts for anything unusual; such as a discharge from the nipples, puckering, dimpling, or scaling of the skin. *Step 2 emphasizes any changes in the shape or contour of your breasts. As you do this you should be able to feel your chest muscles tighten.*
- 2** Watching your breasts closely, clasp your hands behind your head and press your hands forward. Next, press your hands firmly on your hips and bow slightly forward as you pull your shoulders and elbows forward. *The next part of the exam can be done in the shower. Fingers glide over soapy skin, making it easy to determine the texture underneath.*
- 3** Raise your left arm and use the pads of three or four fingers of your right hand to explore your left breast, firmly, carefully and thoroughly. Beginning at the outer edges of your chest, press the flat part of your fingers in a circle, moving in circles slowly around the breast. Pay special attention to the area between the breast and armpit, including the armpit itself. Feel for any unusual lump or mass under the skin. Gently squeeze the nipple and look for any discharge.
- 4** Repeat exactly the same procedure on your right breast. *Do step 5 lying down, this position flattens the breast and makes it easier to examine.*
- 5** Lie flat on your back, with left arm over your head and a pillow or folded towel under your left shoulder. Use the same circular motion as in step 3. Repeat on your right breast.

***If you notice any changes in your breast see your health care team.***

# Keys to Early Detection

## BREAST SELF-EXAMS

Monthly for all women, starting during breast development. A monthly breast self-exam will help you to become familiar with what is normal for your body and make it easier to realize any changes that occur. Monthly breast self-exams are not a replacement for a mammogram.

## CLINICAL BREAST EXAMS

Women age 20-39 no less than every three years, annually for women over age 40. Similar to a breast self-exam, it is performed by a doctor or nurse.

## MAMMOGRAMS

First mammogram by age 40, annually for all women over 40. A mammogram is the best tool available today to assist you and your health care team in diagnosing breast cancer at its earliest stage. A mammogram can detect breast cancer up to two years before you or your doctor can feel a lump.

American Breast Cancer Foundation  
1055 Taylor Ave., Suite 201  
Baltimore, MD 21286  
[www.abcf.org](http://www.abcf.org)  
Ph. 410-825-9388 Fax 410-825-4630  
Toll Free Hotline 877-Key-2-Life  
(877-539-2543)



AMERICAN  
BREAST CANCER  
FOUNDATION®

Because everyone deserves  
a fighting chance

## KEY TO LIFE

*Breast Cancer Screening  
Assistance Program*

If you don't  
find it,  
you can't  
fight it...  
and if you  
don't fight it,  
you can't beat it!

TOLL FREE HOTLINE  
**877-Key-2-Life**

EARLY DETECTION IS THE KEY TO LIFE.



**Early  
Detection  
is the  
Key to Life**

***Are you underestimating your  
risk for breast cancer?***

Seven out of ten breast cancer cases occur in women who have no major risk factors. All women are at risk for breast cancer!

***Know the warning signs  
for breast cancer,  
share them with your loved ones.***

- Changes in color or feel of the skin of the breast, areola, or nipple (dimpled, puckered, scaly, or orange peel looking).
- Discharge from nipple or nipple inverting.
- Changes in size or shape of breast, sudden swelling.
- Lump, bulge, or thickening in or near the breast or under arm.

***If you find any of these changes,  
see your doctor immediately.***



**Key to Life  
Breast Cancer  
Screening  
Assistance  
Program**

***Assistance Provided:***

Financial assistance grants are available to eligible women and men to assist with the following diagnostic tools:

CLINICAL BREAST EXAMINATIONS  
SCREENING AND DIAGNOSTIC MAMMOGRAMS  
ULTRASOUNDS  
SURGICAL CONSULTATIONS  
BIOPSIES

***Eligibility:***

This program is funded through generous contributions of many caring individuals. The American Breast Cancer Foundation provides financial assistance to uninsured and underinsured women and men of all ages for breast cancer screening testing. This includes routine annual screenings for women over 40.

Applicants who are fortunate to qualify for access to The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program funded through the Center Disease Control and Prevention and state cancer programs are referred to their local provider.

Women and men of all ages, with a family income 300% or less of the HHS poverty guidelines, may qualify for the Key to Life Breast Cancer Screening Assistance Program. Those with an income over 300% have the opportunity to request hardship consideration.



**Enrollment**

**Call toll free for a  
confidential interview**

**877-Key-2-Life  
(877-539-2543)**

***Assistance is also available for:***

Wigs for Chemotherapy Patients  
Emergency Medication Assistance  
Prosthesis and Specialized Bras  
Lymphedema Bandages and  
Support Garments



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