

BREAST CANCER PREVENTIVE CARE CHECK LIST

- Regular, monthly breast self-examinations—Breast self-examinations can save your life. Women should report any breast changes to their health professional right away. Detecting breast cancer early, when the disease is in a more curable stage, allows for many new options in treatment and greatly increases the chance of successful medical care.
- Breast exams by a physician—this should be done at least every three years from age 20 to 40 and every year after age 40. It should be a part of your regular gynecological exam. Physicians perform a more thorough examination than a self-exam and can identify any changes in the breast tissue or the lymph nodes. Because of their expertise, they can usually locate lumps at an earlier stage of development. This is an extremely important component of breast cancer early detection.
- Routine mammography—Women age 40 and older should have a mammogram every year and should continue to do so for as long as they are in good health.
- Risk factors—No one is sure what causes breast cancer, but some factors have been linked to a greater risk. If you are older than age 35, have a history of breast cancer in your family, eat a high-fat diet or smoke, you may be at greater risk.

BREAST SELF EXAMINATION GUIDE

BAPTIST IMAGING



**A simple method
for breast exams**

1. Stand before a mirror. Check both breasts for anything unusual. Look for a discharge from the nipples, puckering, dimpling or scaling of the skin.



The next three steps are done to check for any change in the shape or contour of your breasts. As you do them, you should be able to feel your chest muscles tighten.

2. Watching closely in the mirror, clasp your hands behind your head and press your hands forward. Be sure to look at the underside of your breasts. If necessary, lift your breasts up and peek underneath.



3. Next, press your hands firmly on your hips and bow slightly toward the mirror as you pull your shoulders and elbows forward. Look from the collarbone down to the nipple.



4. The final step is to bend over from the waist, with your arms held out in front of you—"diving" into the mirror. Look at the contour. It should be rounded without dimpling, puckering or bulging.



5. Some women do the next part of the exam in the shower. Your fingers will glide easily over soapy skin, so you can concentrate on feeling for changes inside the breast.



Using the opposite hand, start at the collarbone and slide your soapy hand over the breast until you touch the nipple. Now check the opposite side using your other hand.

6. Gently rest your hand on your hip. Using the opposite hand check your underarm area in four different positions: in the center of your armpit, on the underside of your arm from the elbow to the armpit, squeezing in the fleshy part to the front, and finally in the fleshy part to the back.



7. Lie flat on your back, with your arm over your head and pillow or folded towel under your shoulder. This position flattens the breast and makes it easier to check. Examine your breast two different ways.



- a. First, stroke from the outside edge of the breast toward the nipple. Be sure to check not only the top of the breast as you did in the standing step, but also stroke the sides and bottom of the breast.
- b. Second, use small circular motions with the pads of your three middle fingers. Start at the outside edge of your breast and move in a spiral toward the center. Do not press too firmly, but enough to be able to describe the texture. Press the nipple down into the hollow space. Now repeat these two steps on your opposite breast.