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Breast Care

With or Without Implants

by the Breast Centre, Rachel Foster Hospital

Article appeared in Polare: March 1994 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



Breast self-examination helps you know what is normal for your body so you can notice any changes if they happen.

Self-examination of your breasts should be done every two months. If you detect any abnormalities or suspect something is not right contact the breast centre for an appointment. If you are over the age of forty a mammography screening is recommended every two years. The Breast Centre has implant screening available.

Have the necessary tests done so you are reassured. And, if cancer is detected, early detection can make a vital difference.

Breast Cancer

The Breast Care Centre, a service for people over the age of forty suggests the following regarding breast cancer:

- If you are over forty and concerned at the risk of cancer contact the Breast Care Centre for free screening. You will need to inform them if you have implants;
- If you have implants a screening will take about one hour, without implants it will only take about ten to fifteen minutes;
- The screening this Centre provides is only for cancer detection;
- The Breast Care Centre recommends biannual mammography when over the age of forty. If you are under the age of forty and concerned at the risk of cancer contact the Breast Centre; and
- The most important thing is to self-examine your breasts regularly so that you know what is normal for your breasts and help to detect any abnormalities if they occur.

Breast Checks

Breast self-examination helps you to know what is normal for your body so you can notice any changes if they happen. Family planning clinics and women's health centres have pamphlets on how to examine your breasts. It is also a good idea to see a health worker who will take you through the steps of a breast check.

Looking at your Breasts

Stand in front of a mirror and look at your breasts. Notice any changes in size or shape, any dimpling or puckering of the skin or anything different about the nipple. Look at your breasts with arms at your side, with arms raised above your head and with hands on your hips. (With hands on hips, tighten chest muscles and press hands down firmly on hips.)

Feeling in the shower

If you have smaller breasts, this is a good method as wet soapy skin makes it easier. Put one hand behind your head and with gentle circular motion, feel your breast with the other hand. Divide your breast mentally into four sections; keeping your fingers together and flat and using gentle circular motions, feel each section thoroughly. Then carefully feel the nipple and armpit. Now, put your other hand behind your head and check the other breast.

Feeling Lying down

If you have larger breasts, this position is easier. Put a pillow behind one shoulder and place that hand behind your head; using the other hand examine the stretched out breast. Divide your breast mentally into four sections; keeping your fingers together and flat and using gentle circular motions, start from the outside and work towards the nipple. After feeling each section of your breast thoroughly, feel the nipple area and armpit. Repeat for other breast.

If you see or feel any changes in your breasts, see a health worker right away. Remember, in nine out of ten cases a lump is not cancer. Have the necessary tests done so you are reassured. And, if cancer is detected, early detection can make a vital difference.

Polare Magazine is published quarterly in Australia by The Gender Centre Inc., which is funded by the Department of Family & Community Services under the S.A.A.P. program and supported by the N.S.W. Health Department through the AIDS and Infectious Diseases Branch. Polare provides a forum for discussion and debate on gender issues. Unsolicited contributions are welcome, the editor reserves the right to edit such contributions without notification. Any submission which appears in Polare may be published on our internet site. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, The Gender Centre Inc., the Department of Family & Community Services or the N.S.W. Department of Health.

The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.