

Title: Breast Cancer Screening: What you need to know as an informed patient

Author: Sarah Prebil MS4

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Abstract:

Currently, self breast exams as well as clinical breast exams are viewed as possibly cost-saving and life-saving practices for women around the world. However, given the analysis of two large scale studies, self-breast exams accomplish neither of these goals. In fact, these breast exams may be causing more harm than no intervention at all because of unnecessary breast biopsies. Therefore, regular self breast examination cannot be recommended. For screening, women should be aware of any changes in their breasts and see a doctor if a change occurs. Starting at age 40, women should get yearly mammograms.

WEBSITES WITH REPUTABLE INFORMATION

Cancer.gov

Has a variety of information with links to cancer statistics

www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/wyntk/breast/page1

Medlineplus

Links you to many other sites with pictures and graphs

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/breastcancer.html#cat11

Familydoctor.org

Basic information about breast cancer

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/women/reproductive/breast/018.html>

REMEMBER...YOU KNOW YOUR BREASTS BEST!

Call you doctor if you notice any of the following:

- Is there a change in how your breast or nipple feels?
- Is there a change in how your breast or nipple looks?
- Do you have nipple discharge?

BREAST CANCER SCREENING



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AS AN
INFORMED PATIENT

SCREENING IN THE PAST

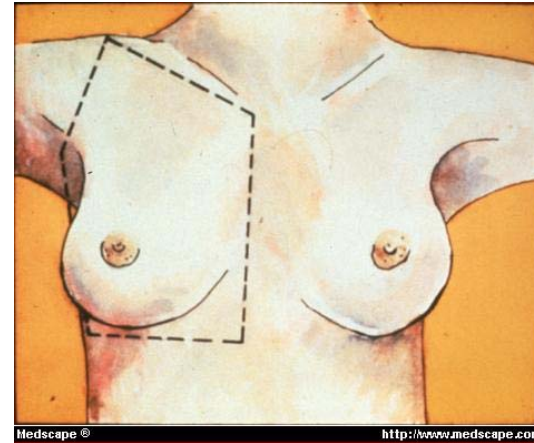
Have you been told to do monthly self breast exams? You may even have a card in the shower showing you the proper technique. It should be noted that based on new studies done on thousands of women, *self breast exams may be causing more harm than good*. These self breast exams can lead to biopsies that can be painful, worrisome and costly.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO SCREEN FOR BREAST CANCER?

1. Any women aged 40 or older should be getting *yearly mammograms*. (Make it shortly after your birthday so you don't forget!)
2. Call your doctor if you notice any changes in your breasts. Abnormal findings include:
 - Change in how your breast/nipple feels
 - Does the skin feel thick?
 - Change in how your breast/nipple looks
 - Is the overlying skin puckered or look like an orange peel?
 - Nipple discharge
 - Is the discharge bloody or sticky?
3. Know your family history. A small percentage of breast cancers may run in the family. Tell your doctor if your mom, sister or maternal relatives have had breast or ovarian cancer. Find out the age they were diagnosed. If you and your doctor determine that breast cancer runs in your family, you should get a mammogram 10 years before your relative was diagnosed with breast or ovarian cancer.

BREAST BASICS

Breast tissue includes the entire area of the breast as well as the underarm area all the way to the sternum and from the clavicle to below the breast.



Your breast tissue may change during the month as the hormones in your body change.

HOW COMMON IS BREAST CANCER?

Based on the SEER statistics, the incidence of breast cancer is 126/100,000 women in the United States. The good news is that the 5-year survival rates are over 88%.