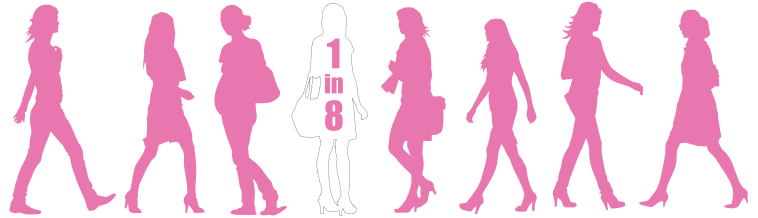


# Breast awareness and self-exam



**Hamilton**  
Diagnostics Center



One in eight women will develop breast cancer at some time during her life, according to the National Cancer Institute. Early detection provides a much better outlook.

## How to examine your breasts

### Lying down

- Lie down on your back, put your right arm behind your head. When lying down, the breast tissue spreads evenly over the chest and makes it easier to feel all your breast tissue.
- While using the finger pads of your 3 middle fingers on your left hand, check for lumps in your right breast. Make small, overlapping circular motions.
- Use 3 different levels (light, medium, and firm) of pressure to check all your breast tissue. It's normal to feel a firm ridge in the lower curve of each breast, but it's important to let your doctor know if you feel anything else out of the ordinary. Ask your doctor or nurse if you have questions on the amount of pressure to use.
- Move your fingers up and down around your breast, starting from the outside and moving to the middle of your chest (sternum or breastbone). Check your entire breast area going down until you feel only ribs and up to your neck.

- Repeat the same process on your left breast, using your left arm behind your head and using the finger pads of your right hand.

### In front of a mirror

- Stand in front of a mirror and press your hands down firmly on your hips. Look at your breasts to check for any changes in size, shape, contour, or dimpling. Also check for redness or scaliness of the nipple or breast skin. Pressing down on the hips will contract the chest muscles and enhance changes in the breasts.

### Sitting or standing

- Check your underarms while sitting or standing by slightly raising your arm so you can easily feel the area. If you raise your arm straight up, your skin tissue will tighten and make it more difficult to check.

**Be sure to let your doctor know if you find anything out of the ordinary. Early detection is a key factor in the outcome for someone who is diagnosed with breast cancer.**