

# CENTRAL CARE CANCER CENTER

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## How do I perform my self-exam?

**1.** Stand undressed from the waist up in front of a mirror with your arms relaxed at your sides.

You can do this part sitting down if you cannot stand comfortably.



**2.** Compare your breasts while turning from side to side. Look for changes in shape, size, skin texture or color including redness, dimpling, puckering or retraction (pulling back of your skin).

**3.** Notice any nipple changes, such as scaliness, a pulling to one side, or a change in direction.



**4.** Place your hands on your waist and press inward, then turn from side to side to note any changes. If you cannot place your hands on your waist, try clasping your

hands together in front of you, to tighten the chest muscles.

**5.** Tightening the chest muscles beneath the breasts in other ways can also help you notice changes. Try different positions, such as putting your hands above your head and turning side to side as you look.

**6.** Place your hands at your waist and bow toward the mirror, letting your breasts fall forward. Note any changes in breast shape.



**7.** Nipple discharge can be a sign of a problem. Look for any discharge in your bra or clothing, but do not squeeze the nipple. Notify your doctor if you notice any discharge.

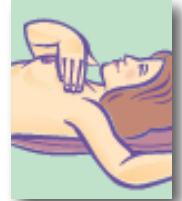


**8.** Feel above and below your collarbone for lumps or thickening. Applying skin lotion can make this easier.

**9.** Check for lumps or thickening under your arm while relaxing your arm at your side. Reach across with your other hand to feel the area. Check deeply up and down the inside of the armpit, and up and forward toward your chest.

For the next steps, lie down. The bed is okay.

**10.** Place a pillow or a folded towel under your left shoulder. This will help your breast tissue spread evenly across your chest wall. Bend your left arm behind your head and reach across with your right hand to your left breast. A little skin cream or lotion on your fingers will make them more sensitive.



**11.** Begin the exam at the armpit. Move your three middle fingers together using light, medium and deep pressures.



**12.** Your hand should move in rows to cover all the breast tissue. Your hand should move in straight rows to cover all the breast tissue from the line where your blouse seam would fall (midaxillary line) to the bra line, the breastbone (sternum) and collarbone (clavicle).



## What if I Find Something?

Most commonly, lumps such as cysts, are benign and are usually not a serious health problem. However, always report any changes in your breasts to your health care provider.