

Monthly Breast Self Exam

Lie down: Lie down on your back and place your right arm behind your head. The exam is done while lying down, not standing up. This is because when lying down the breast tissue spreads evenly over the chest wall and is as thin as possible, making it much easier to feel all the breast tissue.



Use the finger pads of the 3 middle fingers on your left hand to feel for lumps in the right breast. Use overlapping dime-sized circular motions of the finger pads to feel the breast tissue.

Use 3 different levels of pressure to feel all the breast tissue. Light pressure is needed to feel the tissue closest to the skin; medium pressure to feel a little deeper; and firm pressure to feel the tissue closest to the chest and ribs. It is normal to feel a firm ridge in the lower curve of each breast, but you should tell your doctor if you feel anything else out of the ordinary. If you're not sure how hard to press, talk with your doctor or nurse. Use each pressure level to feel the breast tissue before moving on to the next spot.

Move around the breast in an up and down pattern starting at an imaginary line drawn straight down your side from the underarm and moving across the breast to the middle of the chest bone (sternum or breastbone). Be sure to check the entire breast area going down until you feel only ribs and up to the neck or collar bone (clavicle).



There is some evidence to suggest that the up-and-down pattern (sometimes called the vertical pattern) is the most effective pattern for covering the entire breast without missing any breast tissue.

Repeat the exam on your left breast, putting your left arm behind your head and using the finger pads of your right hand to do the exam.



In front of a mirror: While standing in front of a mirror with your hands pressing firmly down on your hips, look at your breasts for any changes of size, shape, contour or dimpling, redness or scali-

ness of the nipple or breast skin. (The pressing down on the hips position contracts the chest wall muscles and enhances any breast changes.)

Standing up: Examine each underarm while sitting up or standing and with your arm only slightly raised so you can easily feel in this area. Raising your arm straight up tightens the tissue in this area and makes it harder to examine.



About Us

Sisters Network Dallas a 501C3 organization founded in June of 2005, SND is the local affiliate of Sisters Network® Inc. (SNI). SNI was founded in 1994 In Houston, Texas and is currently the only national African American breast cancer survivorship organization in the United States.

Sisters' national slogan, "STOP THE SILENCE®," speaks directly to the African American community's long-standing history of not discussing cancer and other life-threatening health concerns. The organization's purpose is to save lives and provide a broader scope of knowledge that addresses the breast cancer survivorship crisis affecting African American women around the world. Sisters Network Inc. is recognized nationally by leading medical establishments and breast cancer physicians and is considered a critical information and resource link for African American women.

For more information or to make a donation, please contact:

Sisters Network Dallas
www.sisternetworkdallas.org
P. O. Box 380354
Duncanville, Texas 75138
972.693.5337

National Headquarters
9668 Westheimer Rd. Ste. 200-132
Houston, TX. 77063
www.sistersnetworkinc.org

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BREAST HEALTH

AWARENESS


Sisters
NETWORK® INC.

Dallas

Affiliate Chapter of Sisters Network Inc.

Breast Cancer is the most fatal health issue for African American Women

- ✘ Though Black women get breast cancer at a slightly lower incidence rate than white women, Black women are 42% more likely to die of breast cancer.
- ✘ Black women under age 35 get breast cancer at two times the rate of white women and die from breast cancer three times as often as white women.
- ✘ Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among black women, and an estimated 33,840 new cases are expected to be diagnosed in 2019.
- ✘ In 2019, Black women will make up 12.5% of all new breast cancer cases and 15.5% of all breast cancer deaths.
- ✘ The overall 5-year relative survival rate for breast cancer diagnosed is 81% for black women versus 91% for white women.
- ✘ 54% of breast cancers in black women are diagnosed at a local stage, compared to 64% in white women.



Breast Cancer should not be a death sentence so why are African American women dying?

- ✘ Black women FEAR a cancer diagnosis and often avoid screening.
- ✘ Black women have less access to health care or health insurance so may have lower frequency of and longer intervals between mammograms.
- ✘ Black women diagnosed with breast cancer have more than twice the likelihood of being diagnosed with a sub-type called Triple Negative Breast Cancer. It has no therapies to prevent recurrence and it affects younger women.
- ✘ Black women are often at a more advanced stage upon diagnosis.
- ✘ Black women may not follow up on abnormal mammogram results because they can't afford the diagnostic testing.
- ✘ Black women have less access to the same prompt high quality treatment that white women have.
- ✘ Black women express that they often feel disrespected by physicians and staff.
- ✘ While 92% of black women agree breast health is important, only 25% have recently discussed breast health with their family, friends, or colleagues. And, only 17% have taken steps to understand their risk for breast cancer.
- ✘ Black women often take care of others at the expense of their own health.

Sisters' Message to You

✘ EARLY DETECTION IS CRITICAL!

- ✘ Know your History! Talk to your family about breast cancer.
- ✘ If you have a family history, ask your doctor for a gene test and set up your screening regimen.
- ✘ If you don't have a family history, you are still at risk! Only 5% of breast cancers are hereditary!
- ✘ Know what your "normal" feels like so you can easily recognize when something is abnormal. If you feel something abnormal, get it checked by a doctor immediately.
- ✘ African American women have dense breasts. When you get a mammogram, go to a facility that only has 3D mammography.
- ✘ If you know that something doesn't feel right or look right, and you don't feel like your doctor is giving you the attention you deserve, find another doctor. Trust your gut and advocate for yourself.
- ✘ Monthly self breast exams can save your life! Check the breasts you love.