

# Breast Awareness

Being breast aware is an important step toward taking responsibility for your own health.

Breast care has become more important for women due to the increase in the incidence of breast cancer.

## Your breast care regime should include:

- Ongoing breast awareness
- Yearly breast examination by your doctor
- Two yearly mammography, if over 50
- Annual mammography if your mother, sister or daughter have had breast cancer

The aim of breast awareness is to become familiar with the appearance, shape and feel of your breasts so that you will notice **ANY CHANGE FROM THE NORMAL YOU.**

A change may be a lump or thickening of the breast tissue which you hadn't felt before or it may be a visual difference in the appearance of your breasts.

## What to look and feel for

- Change in the shape or size of the breasts
- Inflammation, redness or hot spots
- Ulcers or sores which don't appear to be healing
- Change in the direction of the nipple
- Pulling in (retraction) of the nipple
- Discharge from the nipple (not breast milk)
- Any persistent rash on the breast
- Dimpling, puckering or flattening of the skin of the breast
- Any lump or thickening not felt before
- Swelling or shrinkage of part or all of the breast
- Lumps or thickening in the armpit
- Swelling or pain in the upper arm
- Orange peel texture to the skin of the breast.

## How

- Remove your upper garment and stand in front of a good sized well lit mirror.
- Keep your arms by your side and LOOK at your breasts.
- LOOK at the shape and size of your breasts.
- LOOK at the nipple area.
- LOOK at the skin texture.
- Raise your arms and press the palms of your hands together. This will flex your chest muscles and make your breasts move. LOOK at how they move, especially for any dimpling of the skin.
- Lean forward and check the position of the nipples and the movement of your breasts.
- From time to time, use your hands to feel your breasts – perhaps in the shower or while dressing. Remember your breast tissue extends from your collarbone to your “bra-line” and around to your armpits.
- Your monthly period, pregnancy, age and weight changes may alter the shape, size and feel of your breasts. The aim is to become familiar with these changes so changes that are not normal for you can be detected.

## Important

It is essential to see your doctor and have your breasts examined if you notice any changes.

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