

## What is Breast Cancer?

Breast Cancer is the most common type of cancer that causes death, and most frequently encountered in women all over the world. In Turkey, breast cancer ranks among the cancer cases seen in women first, with a rate of approximately 50/100,000. Early diagnosis is important for the effective treatment of the disease and prolonging life expectancy. Early diagnosis of breast cancer can provide a healthy, normal life.

## Breast Self-Exam (BSE)\*

BSE\* is a screening and diagnosis method that plays a great important role in the early diagnosis of breast cancer. In patients who do not participate in a regular mammographic screening program, 80% of breast lumps are detected by BSE. For BSE\*, please visit our website ([www.memeder.org](http://www.memeder.org))

## How To Be Protected?

- Every healthy woman should start a breast self-exam monthly, from the age of 20.
- From the age of 20, women should have a clinical breast examination every year, from their family doctor, Gynecology Specialist or General Surgery Specialist.
- Regular mammography checks should be done from the age of 40.
- The frequency of mammography is determined as every 2 years. However, this interval may be shortened according to the woman's risk of breast cancer.
- A personal calendar should be kept to note the dates of doctor appointments, breast self-exams, and mammograms.
- Eating low-fat and low-calorie meals, exercising 5-7 hours a week regularly, avoiding smoking and alcohol habits should be acquired and maintained.

## First Signs:

Asymmetry in the breast, nipple retraction, spontaneous bloody discharge from the nipple, collapse of the breast skin, redness, thickening, hard, distinguishable, mostly a single and painless mass with a noticeable irregular border, sometimes a mass in the armpit can be also found.

## Situations where a doctor should be consulted:

A mass in the breast is unlikely to be malignant, but every mass should be evaluated by a doctor. If you notice any of the above-mentioned signs, contact your doctor immediately.

# How Should A Breast Self-Exam Be Performed?

## How Should A Breast Self-Exam (BSE) Be Performed?

Breast Self-Exam is the self-examination of every woman's own breasts, monthly. The aim is to ensure that every woman recognizes her own normal breast tissue starting from an early age and is directed to a healthcare professional in case of noticing any unusual changes at an early time.

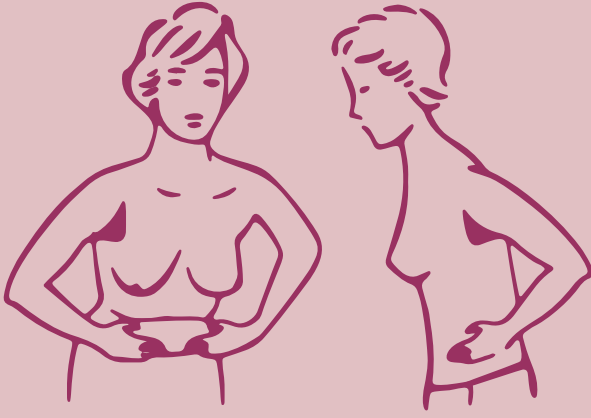
Every woman who cares about her own breast health should check her own breasts every month, starting from the age of 20, between the 8th and 12th days of menstruation, and in menopause, on one day of the month, for the rest of her life.

## Examination by eye:

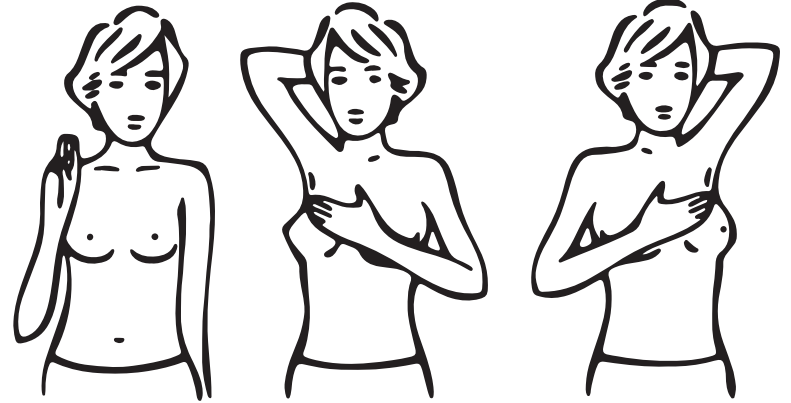
Release both arms at your sides freely, stand in front of the mirror keeping your shoulders straight. Look at the size of your breasts, their symmetry, the color and shape of the skin, the nipples, the under-breast areas, the armpits, turning from the front and to both sides.

The two breasts may not be the same size. This is a normal indication. Repeat the same observation after raising your arms or with both arms behind your head. Meanwhile, observe the breasts, nipples and underarm areas. Pay attention to the presence of puffiness under the armpits.





Press your hands firmly on your lower back, over the leg bones. Lean forward with your shoulders slightly raised. Look at your breasts from the front and both sides. Pay attention if there is any shrinkage or collapse on the skin.

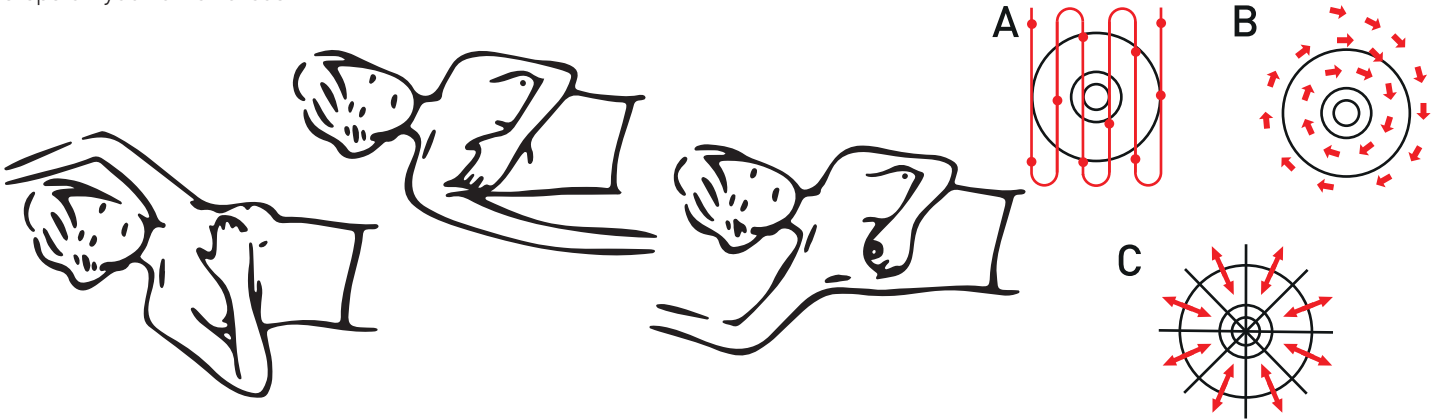


#### Examination using hands while standing:

Begin the examination by increasing the pressure from light to strong, by making small circular movements with the finger pads of the three middle fingers of your hand. Use your left hand for the right breast, and your right hand for the left breast. Examine your entire breast by feeling it. Repeat the same examinations on your other breast.

#### Examination using hands while lying down:

Put your arm aside your body, examine your entire breast with your other hand, drawing parallel lines to each other in the armpit area (A) or interlocking circles clockwise starting from under the collarbone (B) or in the form of arrows ending at the nipple (C). Check for discharge and lumps by squeezing the nipple between the thumb and forefinger of your other hand. Repeat the same steps on your other breast.



#### Examination using hands in the shower - Standing or sitting:

Place your arm above or behind your head on the side to be examined. Start the examination by making circular movements with the finger pads of the 3 middle fingers of your other hand, increasing the pressure from light to strong. Examine the armpit area. Check for discharge by gently squeezing the nipple between the thumb and forefinger of your other hand. Repeat the same examinations on your other breast.

