



YOUR GUIDE TO
BREAST
CANCER
SELF-CHECKS

Includes 6 self exam methods

Two separate, unique breast cancer diagnoses only a year and a half apart? That's right! I have now been through breast cancer twice, once on each breast, and by the grace of God am here with a warning for you.

While I was first diagnosed at 46, I had actually found the lump I suspected could be cancerous at 44. That's right. 18 LONG MONTHS, 4 mammograms, and 3 ultrasounds between when I first felt the lump and when I actually had a biopsy confirming the cancer diagnosis. And that was just the first cancer. The second time around, I had a clean breast MRI in December, a clean mammogram in April, and then found the second lump 3 weeks later in May through a self breast exam.

With the first cancer, I opted for a lumpectomy with radiation as my treatment. When I found the second cancer, I knew immediately that both of the girls were fired and that I would be moving forward with a double mastectomy instead. As I write this article, I am in the reconstruction process and still have tissue expanders in place. Today, in fact, I have scheduled my swap surgery for a month from now to remove the expanders and replace them with silicone implants.

Being diagnosed with invasive lobular breast cancer once rocks your world in a way that is hard to imagine. But making it through that, then finding another lump just a year and a half later in the other breast that is yet again invasive breast cancer... it is enough to make you question everything. The only sense I can make of this second diagnosis is that I am supposed to share my story with the world. God has filled me with a sense of urgency that I MUST warn women and help others find breast cancer before it spreads.

Self breast exams have saved my life and helped me catch breast cancer early.

PLEASE make regular, monthly self breast exams a part of your life. In the following guide, I will take you step-by-step through exactly how to do these exams. They are not hard to do and just take a few minutes.

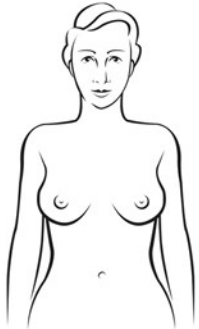
Breast cancer is highly treatable... if it is caught early. Your first step to being a survivor is through your self breast exam.

Yours in Christ,
Julie Lohre

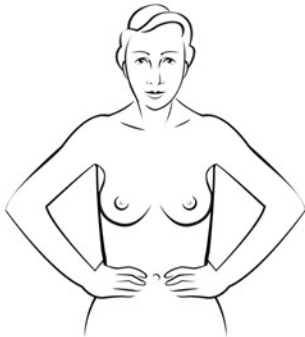


HOW TO DO A BREAST SELF EXAM

Choose a day each month that will be easy to remember and make breast self-awareness a regular part of your good health routine. Breast self-awareness is also important in women with breast implants.



A. Stand before a mirror and look at both breasts. Check for anything unusual, such as nipple retraction, redness, puckering, dimpling or scaling of the skin. Look for nipple discharge. All discharge should be reported to your doctor. Note the color, whether it came from both breasts and whether it came from one or more openings.



B. Next, press your hands firmly on your hips and lean slightly toward your mirror as you pull your shoulders and elbows forward with a squeezing or hugging motion. Look for any change in the normal shape of your breasts.



C. Looking in the mirror, raise your arms and rest your hands behind your head. This allows you to see the underside of your breasts.



D. Place your left hand on your waist, roll your shoulder forward and reach into your underarm area and check for enlarged lymph nodes (small glands that fill with fluid when you have an infection). An enlarged node would feel like a corn kernel or a bean. Also check the area above and below the collar bone. Repeat on the right side.

Many women prefer to do steps D through F in the bath or shower.



E. Raise your left arm. Use the pads of three or four fingers of your right hand to examine your left breast. Use three levels of pressure (light, medium and firm) while moving in a circular motion. Check your breast area using a set pattern. You can choose (1) lines, (2) circles or (3) wedges.



1. Lines

Beginning at the outer edge of your breast, move your fingers downward using a circular motion until they are below the breast. Then move your fingers slightly toward the middle and slowly move back up.



2. Circles

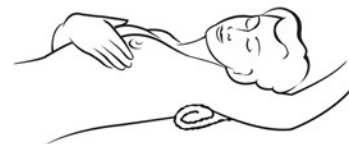
Beginning at the outer edge of your breast, use the flat part of your fingers, moving in circles slowly around the breast. Gradually make smaller and smaller circles toward the nipple. Be sure to check behind the nipple.



3. Wedges

Starting at the outer edge of the breast, move your fingers toward the nipple and back to the edge.

You should not lift your fingers while feeling the breast. Whatever method you choose, make sure to cover the entire area, including the breastbone, collarbone, upper chest area and bra line. Pay special attention to the area between the breast and the underarm itself. Feel for any unusual lump, mass or thickening under the skin.



F. Lie flat on your back with your left arm over your head and a pillow or folded towel under your left shoulder. This position flattens the breast and makes it easier to examine. Use the same motion described in step E. Some women like to use body lotion in this step.