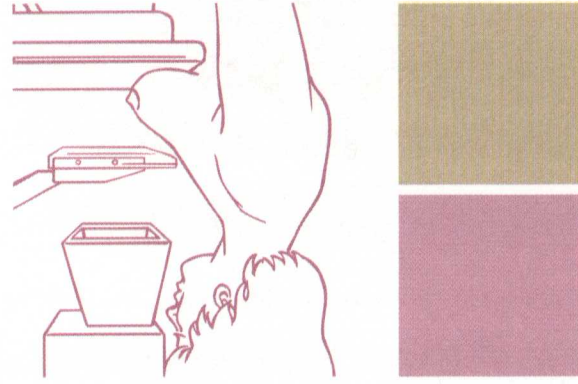


- Discussing your breast health plan with you and showing you the proper way to examine your own breasts

A thorough breast exam can take up to 10 minutes. Talk to your doctor if you feel that your exam was incomplete or rushed.



Mammogram

## A Three-part Action Plan

### Part A: Mammogram

The most important part of your action plan is having regular **mammograms**. These simple breast x-rays are quick, easy, and safe. In fact, mammograms use less radiation than a dentist's x-ray.

And, a mammogram can give you a big head start on treatment. You and your doctor may not feel a lump until it is the size of a pea. But a mammogram can find cancers when they are very small, often several years before a lump or change can be felt.

The American Cancer Society advises you to have yearly mammograms beginning at age 40.

As you grow older, your chances of having breast cancer will increase. More than three-quarters of all breast cancers occur in women 50 and older. Talk to your doctor or nurse today about scheduling your mammogram.



Breast Exam

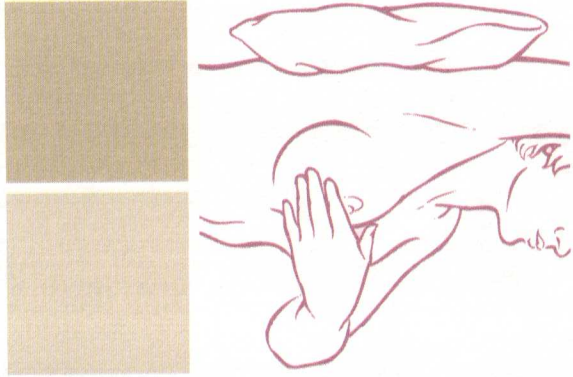
### Part B: Breast Exam

You'll need to see your doctor or nurse for a **breast exam**. All women in their 20s and 30s should have a breast exam as part of their regular health checkups at least every three years. After the age of 40, have a breast exam every year.

### What makes up a good breast exam?

Every breast exam by your doctor or nurse should include:

- Taking a personal health history that includes asking about any breast changes or problems, taking a family history, and asking about family members who have had breast cancer
- Looking at your breasts while you are standing in front of a mirror with your hands pressing down on your hips
- Examining the entire breast area, including up to the neck, into the armpit, over to the center of the chest, and to the bottom of the rib cage
- Examining the breast using a vertical strip (up and down) pattern to make sure that no breast tissue is missed
- Using different amounts of pressure to examine the breast (light, medium, and deep)



Breast Self-exam

### Part C: Breast Awareness

You should become familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel so that if changes occur, you can report them to your doctor right away. You may choose to become familiar with your breasts by doing **breast self-exams** – checking for lumps, thickness, or other changes.

Ask your doctor or nurse to show you how to do the exam correctly. As a reminder, if you do breast self-exams, you should check each finger pads and move them in a small circular pattern using different amounts of pressure (light, medium, and deep) to feel the entire breast. Look at your breast in front of a mirror to check for any changes in how your breasts look or for dimpling of the skin.

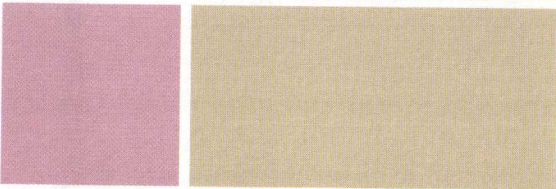
## Your Chances Are Excellent

Begin your action plan now. We don't know how to prevent breast cancer, but we do know how to find it early, when the chance for successful treatment is greatest. Put your plan into action right away so you can continue living your life and staying well.

## What You Need to Know

All women can get breast cancer. Many breast cancers can be treated successfully, but the chances for success in treatment are highest when cancers are found early.





## Keep in Mind

Breast cancer can occur at any age, but it is more likely to occur after age 40 and as you get older.

Some women – because of their family history, a genetic tendency, or certain other factors – may have a greater chance of having breast cancer than others.

These women may need to be screened with an MRI in addition to a mammogram. Talk to your doctor about your history and whether you need additional tests at an earlier age. For more information, please call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345.

## Your Best Defense

When breast cancer is found in its earliest stages, the chance for successful treatment is greatest.

## Decide on a personal action plan.

Set up an action plan that will include:

**A yearly mammogram** starting at age 40 and continuing as long as you are in good health

**A breast exam** every year by your doctor or nurse if you are age 40 or older or every three years if you are in your 20s or 30s

**Breast awareness** so that you will notice any breast changes and report them to your doctor without delay. Breast self-exams are an option for finding changes.

## If you are 40 or older:

1. Have a yearly mammogram and continue to do so for as long as you are in good health.
2. Have a breast exam as part of a periodic health exam, preferably at least every year.
3. Report any breast change to your doctor right away. Breast self-exam is an option for finding changes.

## If you are 20-39 years old:

1. Have a breast exam as part of your periodic health exam, preferably at least every three years.
2. Report any breast change to your doctor right away. Breast self-exam is an option for finding changes.

*Some women – because of their family history, a genetic tendency, or certain other factors – may need to have a screening MRI in addition to mammograms. (The number of women who fall into this category is small – less than 2 percent of all the women in the United States.) Talk with your doctor about your history and whether you should have additional tests at an earlier age. You may also contact the American Cancer Society for information on breast cancer screening.*



We **save lives** and create more birthdays by helping you stay well, helping you get well, by finding cures, and by fighting back.

cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345



Printing of this material was made possible in part by funds raised through Making Strides Against Breast Cancer.



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No.341601 - Rev. 09/14

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# ABCs of Breast Cancer Early Detection

Set a personal action plan



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