

How to **look** for changes!

During each of these stages you should turn from side to side while carefully looking at your breasts in the mirror.



1. Place your hands by your sides.
2. Raise your arms above your head.
3. Place your hands on your hips with your elbow pushed forward.

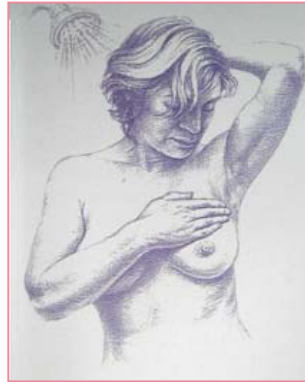


It is important that every woman is breast **aware**.

This means knowing what is normal for you so that if any unusual change occurs, you will recognise it. Get into the habit of looking at and feeling your breasts from time to time. The sooner you notice a change the better, because if cancer is found early, treatment is more likely to be successful.

How to **feel** for changes!

Feel each breast in turn. Keeping your fingers together and flat, firmly move over the whole breast, including the nipple and armpit. You should feel for the changes standing up and lying down.



Know what is **normal** for you

Your breasts will go through many normal changes during life. For example, they are affected by changes in your hormones during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, breast-feeding and the menopause.

What to do if you **find** something!

If you do notice any change in your breasts, see your GP as soon as possible. Remember that most breast changes are not cancer and are harmless. When your GP examines your breasts she or he may be able to assure you or ask to examine you again at different time of your menstrual cycle or alternatively, may send you to the breast clinic for more detailed examination and investigations.

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National Breast Cancer Research Institute

In association with University College Hospital, Galway

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

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NBCRI: the history

Breast Cancer Fundraising and Planning Committee established in 1990.

- Voluntary based NBCRI launched by President Mary Robinson on “Mother’s Day” in 1991.
- Research laboratory facilities developed at UCHG, Clinical Science Institute in 1992.

Since then our ongoing *aims* are to:

- Raise awareness of the disease.
- Conduct focused research into the behaviour of breast cancer.
- Fundraise to provide the most effective treatments available.
- Combine clinical and research activities to develop a better breast cancer service for women in the West of Ireland.

Early diagnosis is a key to surviving breast cancer.

Breast Check, the national breast screening programme, was set up in 2000. It involves inviting well women aged 50-64 years to come for screening free of charge, every two years. The programme started in the East of the country and it will be extended to the whole country over the next few years after the first phase has been evaluated.

Did you know these **facts**?

- More than 1,700 new cases of breast cancer are diagnosed in Ireland each year.
- Irish women have a 1 in 13 chance of developing breast cancer in their lifetime.
- 74% of Irish women with breast cancer discover the lump themselves.
- Only about 5-10% of breast cancers are believed to have a family link.
- The risk of developing breast cancer increases with age. About 80% of breast cancers occur in women over 50 years.
- Around 16 men develop breast cancer in Ireland every year.
- In Europe a woman diagnosed with breast cancer every 2 ½ minutes.

Healthy Lifestyle

While doctors still do not know what causes breast cancer, indications are that a healthy lifestyle may provide some protection.

In general you should:

- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Eat a balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables
- Take regular exercise
- Limit alcohol to 2 units a day or less (one unit equals a small glass of wine, a spirit measure or half a pint of beer).

What **changes** should you be aware of?

A good time to look at your breasts is about one week after your period or around the same time each month if you are no longer having periods.

Take note of:

- A lump, any size, or thickening in your breast
- Constant pain in one part of your breast.
- A change in size or shape – it may be that one breast has become larger.
- Changes in the nipple – in direction or shape, pulled in or flattened or unusual discharge, especially if bloodstained.
- Changes on or around the nipple – rash, flaky or crusted skin.
- Changes in the skin – dimpling, puckering or redness.
- ‘Orange peel’ appearance of the skin caused by unusually enlarged pores.
- Prominent veins that have become more noticeable.
- Lump or swelling or constant pain in your armpit.

For further information about breast cancer please call:

**Action Breast Cancer (ABC) Helpline
Freefone 1800 30 90 40**