Step 3: Feel your breasts while lying down.

Lie down and place a folded-towel underneath the shoulder on the side you are about to examine. Raise the arm on the same side. Touch with your opposite hand using the method described in Step 2.

Check the opposite breast using the same method.
Write down any lumps or problems you find while examining your breasts. Take the record with you when you go to see the breast specialist.

If you have any of the following symptoms, you must meet with a breast specialist.

There are limitations to breast self-exams since they are performed by ordinary persons who are not trained physicians. Therefore, starting breast cancer screening test in a timely manner is as important as performing a self-exam. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Forces recommends the following:

- Start a monthly self-exam at 30
- Consider starting screening mammography at 40
- Get a clinical breast exam by a physician every two years
- Get screening mammography and a clinical exam by a physician every 2 years at age 50 to 74
- If you have have risk factors for breast cancer such as family history, talk to your provider.

Information for patients and families
Breast Self-Exam

Breast Self-Exam Book

- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August
- September
- October
- November
- December

Source: Korea Breast Cancer Foundation

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Breast self-exam

Despite the fact that new, high-end techniques to detect cancer are endlessly being developed, two out of three breast cancer patients coming to hospitals are still detecting the lumps by themselves. Therefore, it is the important first step to know what breast self-exam is, and how to perform it so that we can detect breast cancers early.

Why do I need to perform a breast self-exam?
There are controversies surround the fact that an ordinary person who is not familiar with breast cancer can discover breast cancer through a self-exam. However, by touching their own breasts and becoming familiar with them, women can become more sensitive to any changes in their breasts. This will lead to a more accurate test and an early discovery of breast cancer. Even for women who already had a breast cancer surgery or one breast, it is important to keep the habit of checking the other breast through self-exam.

Which part is prone to breast cancer?

As shown in the picture on the left, more than 50% of the time, breast cancer occurs on the upper outer part of the breast. Therefore, a more thorough exam should be done by palpating the part that runs from the upper outer part of the breast to the armpit.

How do I perform a breast self-exam?

Step 1: Look at your breasts in the mirror
(Compare the shape or contour with that of your usual breasts)

Step 2: Feel your breasts while you are standing or sitting
(Touch gently using soap or lotion.)

Place your left hand, palm up on your forehead. Slowly feel the breasts using the lower pads of the three middle fingers. Move in small circles in a clockwise direction. Start the circles from the the outer half of your breast towards the nipple. Each circle should be about the size of a dime. Slightly give pressure so that it feels like you are rubbing into the breast. After checking the entire breast, the same should be done to check the armpits and the parts above and below the clavicle.

After checking the areas close to the nipple using circular pressures, carefully check the nipple by lightly squeezing it vertically and horizontally to see if there is any secretion. Check the opposite breast using the same method.