Human Sexuality
“Sexuality and the Physician”

BREAST SELF EXAM – BSE
Monthly Breast Self-Examination

Breast self-examination is most effective as an early detection measure when performed in partnership with regular mammography and an annual clinical examination. **Remember, you are looking for changes in your breasts.**

**Procedures for breast self examination:**

In front of a mirror, clasp your hand behind your head and pull your elbows forward.

- Look for any changes, like dimpling, or changes in texture or color of the skin.
- Gently squeeze both nipples and look for any discharge.
- Pull your shoulders and elbows forward as you press your hands on your hips and lean slightly toward the mirror.

In the shower, place the flat part (not tips) of your three middle fingers on your opposite breast.

- Feel for thickening, lumps, or changes as your fingers make a circular motion using first light then medium and deep pressures.
- Begin at the armpit and glide to 3 fingers-width away in a spiral pattern around the curve of the breast inward toward the nipple.
- Be sure to thoroughly examine the area from the armpit to the breastbone, under your nipple, and all the way from the collarbone down to the lower bra line.
- Repeat procedure for the opposite breast.

Lie on your back with a pillow towel under your right shoulder to flatten and spread your breast tissue.

- Place your right arm under your head and use your left hand to examine your breast as you did in the shower, using a circular finger motion with 3 levels of pressure to cover the entire breast and underarm area.
- Repeat for opposite breast.