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Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at Andreini & Company.

# Take Charge of Breast Health

## *Perform breast self-exams for early cancer detection*

According to the Mayo Clinic, breast self-exams (BSEs) are extremely useful measures in helping women become familiar with the look and feel of their breasts when they are healthy. In doing regular exams, women can determine if there is a change in their breast tissue, thus indicating breast cancer or other conditions.

### **Conducting a Self-Exam**

The American Cancer Society recommends the following technique for conducting a BSE:

- Lie down and place one arm behind your head.
- Use the pads of your middle three fingers of opposite hand (left hand for right breast and right hand for left breast) to check your breast tissue. Use an up-and-down pattern from your underarm to your breastbone to your collarbone to feel for changes.

- Look in a mirror for changes to size, shape or coloring.

### **Breast Tissue Changes**

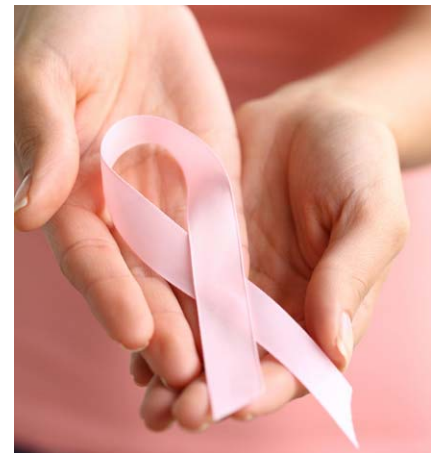
Contact your doctor if you notice any of the following changes to your breast tissue while doing a self-exam:

- Lumps that differ from normal breast tissue
- Dimpling skin
- Red or scaly skin
- Nipple discharge or pain.

It is normal for breast tissue to change during menstrual cycles, pregnancy, menopause or while taking birth control pills or other hormone drugs. However, if you notice changes at other times in your life, it is strongly suggested that you visit a doctor immediately.

For more in-depth assistance

on how to perform a BSE, visit [www5.komen.org](http://www5.komen.org) and click on "Understanding Breast Cancer," then "Early Detection and Screening." This site provides a Breast Self-Awareness Interactive Tool that you can view. You can also view a color diagram on [www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org) by selecting the tab "Symptoms & Diagnosis," then going to "Screening and Testing" and "Breast Self-Exam."



### **Did you know...?**

Don't forget your annual gynecological visit! When visiting your physician for your annual Pap smear and pelvic exam, your doctor will also conduct a breast exam to look and feel for changes to your breast tissue. This should be a critical part of your disease prevention care.