

## What else can I do to prevent breast cancer?

There is no absolute proof that diet can affect the risks of developing breast cancer. However, following Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating helps maintain an overall good health. Therefore you should:

- Have a fiber-rich diet
  - Choose lower-fat products
  - Limit salt, alcohol, and caffeine intake
- You should also aim at maintaining a healthy body weight by exercising regularly.

## Am I at risk of developing breast cancer?

You are considered to be at "higher risk" of developing breast cancer if you:

- Are over 50 years old
- Have had breast cancer before
- Have a family member (especially mother or sister) who had breast cancer
- Have never had a child or if you were older than 30 years old when you had your first child
- Began your periods very early or had your menopause very late.

Being at "higher risk" does not mean that you will develop breast cancer. However, it means that you should be more careful about your breast health.

The CU Healthy Program gratefully acknowledges Berlex Canada's START SMART education program and Ontario Breast Screening Program as resources for the information in this brochure

## CU Healthy

**HCS** wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this through our:

- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Interns
- Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- Website ([carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health))
- Facebook page
- Newsletters, class presentations, workshops and more . . .

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or [cu\\_healthy@carleton.ca](mailto:cu_healthy@carleton.ca).



2600 CTTC Building

613-520-6674

[carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health)

# Understanding Breast Examination



613-520-6674

[carleton.ca/health](http://carleton.ca/health)

You have the primary responsibility for your health. Doing a monthly breast self-examination is a very important part of this responsibility because it is the best way to detect breast cancer in its early stages. But before you examine your breasts, let's look at the facts:

- Most breast lumps are not found by doctors. They are found by women, either by accident or when doing breast-self-examination.
- Most breast lumps turn out to be benign (non-cancerous) and are not dangerous.
- Even if a lump is cancerous, the cancer can be cured in most cases if it is found early enough and the disease is confined to the breast. That's why early detection is so important.

There are lumps that can be seen and not felt. Therefore, a woman's best protection includes a combination of breast self-examination, breast examination done by a doctor and mammography.



## When should I examine my breasts?

Each month, about a week after your menstrual period ends. Waiting a week allows the breast swelling you may have around the time of your period to go away. If you don't have periods or if your periods are very irregular, choose a date each month that is easy to remember. Do your examination on that date each month.



If you examine your breasts thoroughly and regularly, you will get to know how they normally look and feel. This will make it easier to notice any changes. If you notice any of the following changes in one breast, compare it to your other breast. If both breasts do not look or feel the same to you, have your health care provider examine you as soon as possible.

- Changes in the size or shape of your breasts
- Areas of your breasts that become red, hot or look like the texture of an orange peel
- Dimples, creases or folds of your breast skin that are new
- Changes to your nipples or your nipple area such as an itchy red rash
- Lumps in your breasts that were not present before
- Fluid leaking from your nipple

## When should my doctor examine my breasts?

You should see your doctor for check-ups at least once a year. During this visit ask your doctor to do a breast examination. If you find a lump or something that doesn't feel right between visits, schedule an appointment.



## What is a mammography?

Mammography is an X-ray of the breast. A mammography can help find lumps that are so small that they cannot be felt by you or your doctor. Mammography does not cause cancer and is usually not painful. Some women may find it uncomfortable because of the compression of the breast between two plates.

## When should I have a mammography?

If you are over 50 years old you should have a mammography every two years. These routine mammographies are used for comparison purposes. If you are under age 50 and you are concerned about risk factors, ask your doctor about a mammography.