

## **Breast Self-Exam**

Breast self-examination is an important practice to help detect breast diseases, including breast cancer. By doing this, you will become familiar with the way your breasts feel and will be able to notice any changes. Regular inspection shows what is normal for you and will give you confidence in your exam.

**It is important to examine your breasts once a month about a week after each menstrual period.**

### **How to Examine Your Breasts**

Examine your breasts while standing in front of a mirror and while lying down.

#### **While Looking in a Mirror**

1. Hold your arms raised high overhead and look at your breasts. Look for any changes in the shape of each breast, a swelling, a dimpling of the skin or changes in the nipple.
2. Look at your breasts with your arms at your sides. Put the palms of your hands on your hips and press down firmly to flex your chest muscles. Your left and right breast will not match exactly; one is probably slightly larger than the other.
3. Squeeze the nipple gently between the thumb and index finger to check for any drainage. Any sign of discharge may be abnormal and should be checked by your doctor.

#### **While Lying Down**

1. Place your right hand behind your head.
2. Place your left hand, fingers flat, in the underarm area.
3. Using a circular motion, examine the underarm area first. Then move around the outside of the breast. Feel for lumps, swelling or any changes. Continue this circular motion until you have examined the entire breast.
4. Place your left hand behind your head, and using your right hand, examine your left breast in the same way.

### **When to Call the Doctor**

If you find a lump or you notice any changes, call your doctor or the Nationwide Children's Hospital Adolescent Health Clinic at (614) 722-2450 to make an appointment.

If you have any questions, please ask your doctor or nurse or call \_\_\_\_\_.