

October

It's breast cancer awareness month and what better way to celebrate than by taking care of your bosom. Dr Sharina Binti Mohd Razali, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at Columbia Asia Hospital Bukit Rimau, shares the right way to perform a breast self-examination (BSE).



Step 1:

Begin by looking at your breasts in the mirror with your shoulders straight and your arms on your hips. Both breasts should be symmetrical in size, shape and colour. You should also check for any unusual swelling or distortion.

Look out for:

- **Dimpling or puckering**
- **Inverted nipple (pushed inwards instead of outwards)**
- **Redness, soreness, rash, or swelling**

Step 2:

Raise your arms above your head and look for changes.

Step 3:

While you're still at the mirror, look for any signs of fluid coming out of one or both nipples – this could be a watery, milky or yellow fluid, or blood.

Step 4:

Next, feel your breasts while lying down, using your right hand to feel your left breast and then your left hand to feel your right breast. Use a firm, smooth touch with the first few finger pads of your hand, keeping the fingers flat and together. Use circular motions and cover the entire breast from collarbone to the top of the abdomen, and from cleavage to armpit.

Step 5:

Finally, feel your breasts while you're standing or sitting. Many women find that the easiest way to feel their breasts is when their skin is wet and slippery, so they like to do this step in the shower. Cover your entire breast, using the same hand movements described in step four.

TIP:

The best time to do a BSE is after your monthly period, when your breasts are not tender and swollen. You're advised to do it every month and become familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel. If you notice any lumps or skin changes, do not panic as 80 per cent of the time, the lumps are not cancerous.