

# Healthy breasts

## Your selfcare guide



Empower women with knowledge and  
preventive care for optimal breast health

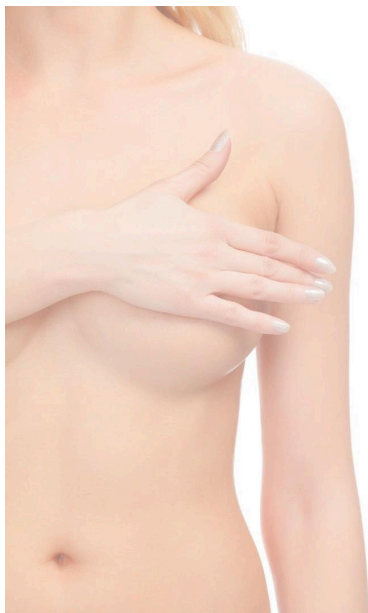
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# Healthy Breasts: Your guide to self-care

Your step towards a healthy future

Welcome to your personal journey to breast health



At the Safe Breast Examination Foundation (Stichting Veilig Borstonderzoek), we are convinced that you are the most important person in monitoring your own health. And the health of your breasts is certainly part of that. All too often, we hear stories about uncertainty, fear, or a lack of knowledge when it comes to breast health. We want to change that. This lesson package is specifically for you, to provide you with the knowledge, the tools, and especially the self-confidence to actively and proactively contribute to the vitality of your breasts.

## Why is this lesson package so important?

Breast health is a broad topic, and it goes far beyond just the medical examinations you undergo from time to time. Of course, those are essential, and you can read more about them on the website of De Groene Zuster or Leeef. But at least as important a part of breast health lies in your daily choices and in how well you know your own body. This lesson package provides information with **concrete tips, advice, and tools** in the areas of lifestyle, nutrition and self-care, bras, dry brushing, an understanding of the lymph system, and knowledge of the various breast examinations. These elements can have a surprisingly positive effect on your breast health. See it as an accessible and complete guide that inspires you to proactive self-care in your daily choices. Small adjustments can make a big difference in the long run!

## Your role is crucial!

You are the expert on your own body. Nobody knows your breasts as well as you do. By embracing the information in this lesson package, you take control into your own hands. You not only learn how to recognize signs but also how to contribute to optimal breast health through daily habits. It is a journey of self-discovery and empowerment that you can start whenever it suits you, at your own pace.

## What awaits you in this lesson package?

We will take you step-by-step through the various aspects of breast health. You will discover:

- **How to get to know your breasts** through a simple self-examination and what is 'normal' for you. And of course, how to perform a good self-examination
- The surprising
- **influence of your lifestyle and diet** on the health of your breasts, with practical tips for daily application.
- **Practical self-care tips** ranging from the right bra to the effect of dry brushing and the importance of skin care.
- The **essential role of professional examination** and how this seamlessly aligns with your own self-care efforts.
- With all the information, we aim to give you a triple examination so that we will not miss 'anything'. This is also called the **triple test**.

With this lesson package, we want to contribute to greater awareness about breast health and encourage you to take preventive measures for a long-term healthy future. Let's build your vital breast health together.

**Your healthy future starts today!**

# Module 1: Know your breasts - a starting point for self-care

## Know your breasts: your starting point for self-care

### Why self-examination is essential for your health

**Every woman is unique**, and so are her breasts. They change throughout your life, influenced by hormones, age, pregnancy, breastfeeding, and menopause. Naturally, breasts often feel irregular; they can be lumpy, glandular, or grainy. This is completely normal. Although every breast is unique and slight asymmetry is common, we believe that striving for an image of **ideal symmetry** is valuable. The goal is for you to get to know **your** breasts well, so you know what is normal for you and, most importantly, notice **changes or new asymmetries** faster

The power of early recognition of **breast cancer**, when detected early, is more often treatable. And you play a crucial role in that early detection! Regular self-examination allows you to become familiar with the structure of your breasts. This makes changes that were not previously present more noticeable. This does not mean you diagnose yourself - that is the work of professionals - but you are the first and most important link in signaling. Your alertness can save lives.

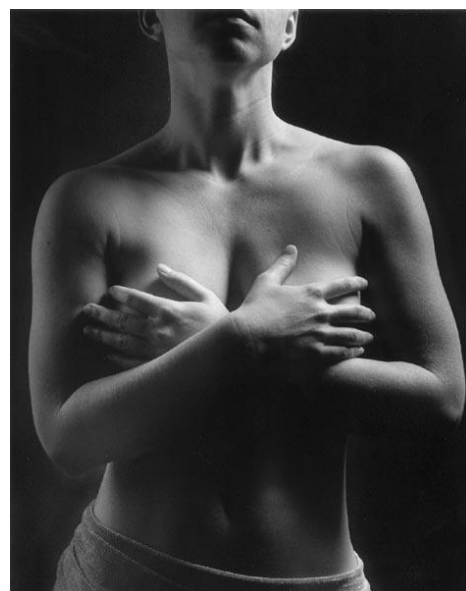
### Anxiety or empowerment? Choosing knowledge.

Perhaps the idea of self-examination feels exciting or even frightening. That is an understandable reaction. But see it not as looking for 'something scary', but as an act of **self-love and empowerment**. You take control of your health into your own hands. This lesson package gives you the tools to do this in a calm, systematic way. It's about knowing, not diagnosing. If in doubt, always contact your doctor, and that's exactly what this lesson package encourages you to do.

### When do you perform a self-examination?

To properly assess changes, it is important to perform a self-examination regularly, for example, **once a month**.

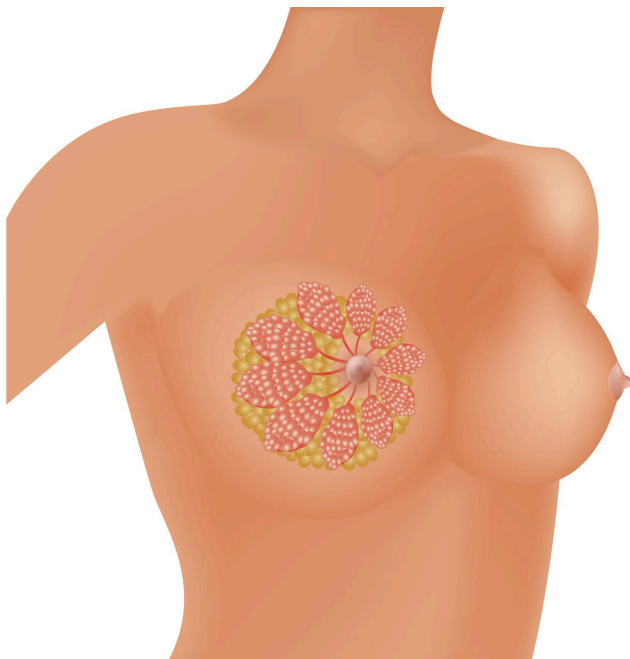
- **During or just after your menstrual cycle:** The best time is a few days after your menstruation, when your breasts are less tense and sensitive. Choose, for example, the 7th to the 10th day of your cycle.
- **After menopause:** Choose a fixed day of the month that you can easily remember, for example, the first day of each month.
- **Pregnancy or breastfeeding:** It is also important to check your breasts then. They can be extra sensitive and change in structure. Learn what is normal for you then. If you feel lumpy tissue, it is



probably an accumulated milk gland. Gently massage it loose. You can also do this with a shower. Let the spray of the shower gently massage your breast. Don't forget to contact your doctor if it seems to become inflamed. Our mothers used to put cabbage leaves in their bra if their breasts felt warm and inflamed during the breastfeeding period. This can still help a lot. Buy white cabbage, bruise the leaves, and place them in your bra. Just leave them in all night.

## Step by Step: How to get to know your breasts

### Let's start with the anatomy:



**Glandular tissue (milk glands):** This is the most functional part of the breast and is responsible for the production of breast milk after childbirth. The glandular tissue is organized into 15 to 20 lobes, each of which is subdivided into smaller lobes. Each lobule contains clusters of milk-producing sacs, called alveoli. In the drawing, you can see these as the pink lobes.

**Milk ducts (ducts):** From the alveoli, the produced milk flows through a network of small tubes, the milk ducts. These ducts come together in larger ducts that eventually open into the nipple.

**Fatty tissue:** Fatty tissue surrounds the glandular tissue and is responsible for most of the size and shape of the breast. The amount of fatty tissue varies greatly per individual.

**Connective tissue (Cooper's ligaments):** This tissue gives the breast structure and support. Cooper's ligaments are strong, fibrous bands that connect the skin and the deeper muscle tissue, thus helping to hold the breast in place.

**Blood vessels and lymph vessels:** The breast is richly supplied with blood and also contains an extensive network of lymph vessels. These lymph vessels drain lymph (fluid with waste products and immune cells) to the lymph nodes, mainly in the armpit.

**Nerves:** Nerves provide the breast with sensation and are involved in reflexes that are important for breastfeeding, such as the let-down reflex.

**Nipple and areola:** The nipple is the protruding part of the breast where the milk ducts open. The areola is the pigmented area around the nipple. Both the nipple and the areola contain small glands (Montgomery's glands) that secrete an oily substance that protects and lubricates the skin during breastfeeding.



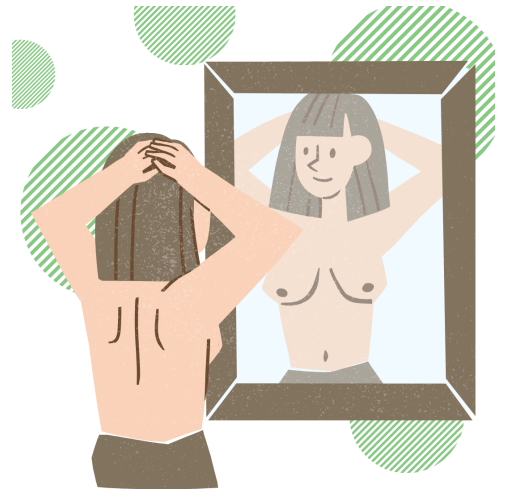


## A simple routine for every month

To get to know your breasts well, you can perform the self-examination in three steps: look and feel standing (in the shower). Always look and feel for the differences between your breasts

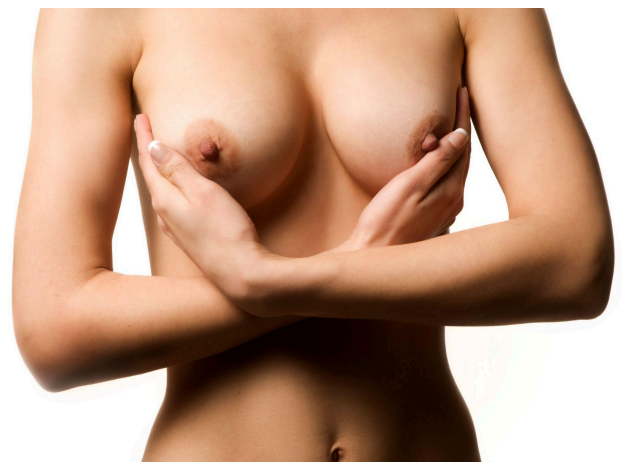
**Step 1: Look in the mirror (Visual inspection)** Stand in front of a mirror with your upper body unclothed. Pay attention to the shape and size of your breasts. Perform the following checks:

1. **With your arms at your sides:** Pay attention to the size, shape, and symmetry of your breasts. Do you see new abnormalities or changes in symmetry that you didn't see before? Also, pay attention to dimples, dents, wrinkles, or other changes to the skin. Does the nipple look different (for example, retracted)?
2. **With your hands on your hips, shoulders forward:** Tighten your chest muscles. This can make hidden dimples or dents visible.
3. **With your arms above your head:** Again, pay attention to the general contours of your breasts and any skin or nipple changes.



### Step 2: Systematic feeling

**Examining both** breasts at the same time is less stressful than examining breast by breast. In the shower is easy, because the smoothness of wet skin sometimes makes it easier to notice changes. Cross your arms in front of your chest with your left hand on your right breast and vice versa. Feel both of your breasts at the same time and on the opposite spots. You often notice that the lumpiness you feel in one breast is also in the other, and that you therefore don't have to worry. This is aimed at feeling for any differences or irregularities.





## Deeper insight into your breast tissue

In addition to visually inspecting and feeling your breasts, it is valuable to know how your breast tissue is structured and can change. Many women worry about lumps or irregularities they feel, while these are often completely normal. In the video below, **Frauke** gives you a clear explanation of breast tissue, based on a number of important questions that many women have:

- What is the 'fattening process' of the breasts and why does the tissue change as you get older?
- What do milk glands feel like and what is the comparison with grapes?
- What are fibrocystic breasts and what is mastopathy?

**Watch the video** to get a deeper insight into what you feel during your monthly self-examination. This knowledge helps you get to know your breasts with confidence.

[Klik hier om de video te bekijken](#)

## What feels normal and when should you see your house doctor?

As mentioned earlier, breasts naturally often feel a bit lumpy. The most important thing is that you learn what is normal **for you** and especially pay attention to new or abnormal differences. Contact your doctor if you notice any of the following changes that are new or persistent:

- A new hard lump or thickening in the breast or armpit, or a clear new asymmetry.
- Change in the size or shape of the breast.
- Retracted nipple, or discharge from the nipple (especially if it is bloody).
- Change in the skin of the breast, such as redness, flaking, eczema, or an 'orange peel' appearance.
- Persistent pain in one specific spot in the breast or armpit.

Remember: these changes do not always mean breast cancer, but it is important to have them checked by a professional.

**Your monthly routine: an act of self-love.** Make self-examination a regular part of your monthly routine. Choose a moment that works for you - maybe while showering, or before bed. It is your moment of self-care, an important investment in your health and well-being.

## Module 2: Lifestyle & Breast Health - your daily influence

### Smart choices for a vital body and healthy breasts

**Your body: a complex interplay** Did you know that your daily choices play a much bigger role in your overall health - and therefore also that of your breasts - than you might think? Our body is a complex, but resilient system. What you eat, how you move, and how you deal with stress all influence your hormone balance, your immune system, and the health of your cells. And those are all factors that directly or indirectly influence the health of your breasts. The good news is: this means that you can make a powerful contribution yourself with conscious choices!

### Nutrition: your fuel for health

Organs such as your liver, kidneys, lungs, skin, and your intestines are important for **excreting toxins**, and when they function well, it gives well-being. These organs need good nutrients to work properly: eat a lot of vegetables, preferably at least 400-500 grams per day. Be careful with too many raw green vegetables such as spinach; this contains a lot of oxalic acid. Mediterranean food with a lot of vegetables, fish, fruit, nuts, legumes, poultry, some sour dairy such as yogurt and cottage cheese is fine. Furthermore, olive oil and butter for healthy fats in the kitchen are very healthy. Eat as many fresh and unprocessed products as possible, do not eat products to which sugar has been added.

**What about proteins?** We know plant-based proteins and animal proteins. Eat meat preferably from animals that have walked, flown, or swum, and if your budget allows, choose organic as much as possible. Fatty fish species such as herring, sardine, salmon, mackerel, and tuna. White fish species are lean. Red meat such as beef, lamb, and game). Poultry, such as organic chicken and turkey. You can safely eat eggs, and also choose organic as much as possible here. Do you make a bone broth? Easy to make in a slow cooker or just let it simmer for 24 hours. Put all the bones you have collected recently in it. You can always put this in the freezer until you have saved enough. Think of chicken bones, shanks, oxtail, and fish bones. Very good for your intestines and joints.

If you are used to eating a lot of **wheat products**, try to leave them alone a bit more. The gluten in wheat (also in spelt and rye) are stressful for your intestines. For example, eat some rice cakes and other gluten-free crackers for a while. If you want, you could also consider a **detox** to clean up fungi and parasites from your digestive system. We would recommend Hulda Clarks parasite cleansing.



We often hear that omega 3-6-9 would be good for us. But we already get a lot of omega 6 through certain foods, and this can promote inflammation. An oil that contains a lot of omega 6 is sunflower oil, margarine, half-fat margarine, and salad oil. Replace these oils with coconut fat and butter.

**Sugars:** limit sugars and switch to stevia, honey, and erythritol. Starting the day with lukewarm water with fresh lemon juice gives your stomach the right digestive juices and detoxifies immediately. This way, you get rid of what was detoxified during the night first thing in the morning. Drinking enough **water** is important, but also remember that we are not a water supply company. It can also be too much. Keep it to a maximum of 3 liters per day.

**Alcohol:** Limit alcohol intake. Even moderate consumption is associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. It is best to stop drinking alcohol altogether.

In our food, toxins are processed that cause a disturbance in your **hormone balance**. These substances resemble estrogen, so your body produces little or no of its own estrogens. Think of:

- **Pesticides** from agriculture, herbicides: these agents are intended to disrupt the hormone system of plants and insects. Eat organic as much as possible.
- **Plasticizers in plastics.** Plastic is hard by itself. Film and plastic bags are treated with plasticizers, which are hormone disruptors. If food or drinks are packaged in this type of plastic, some of these substances partially penetrate the contents. Never heat food packaged in plastic. It is better to take fresh bread that is still warm in a paper bag.
- **Preservatives in care products.** These agents are intended to hinder the division of bacteria and fungi in care products; they disrupt the hormonal system of bacteria and fungi. They also have an effect on the human hormonal system. Also think of panty liners, sanitary pads, diapers, and plasters.
- **Heavy metals.** These substances disrupt the detoxifying function of the liver and therefore also the possibility that the liver quickly breaks down the body's own hormones as well as the hormones that enter through food and skin. Think of lead (lipstick) and mercury (farmed fish). The plastic coating in cans often contains BPA, a substance that can be a hormone disruptor. Studies have shown that eating from a can can increase the amount of BPA in urine. After opening the can, store food in a different container, preferably made of glass or hard plastic.
- **Deodorant:** Use deodorant without aluminum. Aluminum blocks the sweat glands, with the result that sweating is no longer possible. This is not healthy in the long run. Also, make sure there are no parabens in the deodorant. Parabens are hormone-disrupting substances; they disrupt estrogen metabolism. A good estrogen metabolism is very important, especially for the breasts.

## Books for more information:

- [Breast Health Handbook and medical thermography](#), Francine van Broekhoven.

## Movement: More than just fitness

Regular physical activity is one of the most powerful tools you have for your health, including that of your breasts.

- **Maintain a healthy weight:** Sufficient exercise helps maintain a healthy weight. Overweight, especially after menopause, can increase the risk of breast cancer because fatty tissue produces estrogens. You can find more about diet and weight loss at the bottom of this module.
- **Find what suits you:** Whether it's walking, cycling, dancing, yoga, swimming, or gardening - every bit of exercise counts. Aim for at least 30 minutes of intensive exercise per day. A higher heart rate and perspiration is what we want! That can be household chores.

## Stress Management: Healthy mind, healthy body

Chronic stress is a silent killer for your health. It can disrupt your hormone balance and suppress your immune system, which can also indirectly affect your breast health.

- **Find relaxation:** Discover what helps you relax. This can be prayer, mindfulness, meditation, deep breathing exercises, spending time in nature, creative pursuits, or simply reading a good book.
- **Regularly seek out green spaces;** it doesn't have to be a forest right away. A nearby park or sitting by the water also gives you peace. If you live near the beach, that is a very healthy place. The sun and the air full of minerals will quickly give you new energy.
- **Prioritize sleep:** Sufficient and quality sleep is essential for recovery and balance in your body. Sleeping in a dark room provides a deep sleep. So sleep with blackout curtains. A midday nap can be very helpful in maintaining your day and night rhythm.
- **The sun:** try to be outside without sunglasses. By wearing sunglasses, your body thinks it is evening and will produce different hormones ; and that while your body is, for example, in the sun. In the car, it can be safer to wear sunglasses; the point is that you handle it consciously.



## What you should avoid or limit

- **Smoking:** Smoking is harmful to your entire body and also increases the risk of various types of cancer, including breast cancer.
- **Sitting still** is sometimes called the new smoking. See what you can do if you are limited. You can already take very simple steps at home with Leslie Sansone on YouTube.

**Your proactive step to vitality.** The choices you make today affect your health tomorrow. By taking conscious steps in the areas of nutrition, exercise, and stress management, you directly invest in the vitality of your breasts and your overall well-being. You have more influence on this than you think!

## Weight loss by fasting

The primary mechanism behind weight loss with intermittent fasting is creating a calorie deficit. Because you have a limited time window to eat, you are likely to consume fewer calories than you burn.

In addition, there are some other factors that play a role:

- **Insulin sensitivity:** Intermittent fasting can improve insulin sensitivity. Lower and more stable insulin levels ensure that your body can more easily access stored body fat for energy.
- **Fat burning (metabolic switch):** After a few hours without food, your body depletes its sugar reserves and begins to burn stored fat for energy. This is also called a "metabolic switch".
- **Human Growth Hormone (HGH):** During longer fasting periods, the production of human growth hormone can increase, which can help with fat burning and muscle preservation.

## Weight loss with intermittent fasting:

We have chosen this 'diet' because it stays close to your own eating habits. Many diets are focused on foods that you are not used to and foods that may not suit you. This diet is about the time when you do and do not eat. There are different ways to apply intermittent fasting:

- **16:8 method (time-restricted eating):** You fast for 16 hours a day and eat all your meals within an 8-hour time window (for example, from 12:00 to 20:00). This is one of the most popular and feasible methods.
- **5:2 method:** You eat normally for 5 days and limit your calorie intake drastically for 2 days a week (around 500-600 kcal per day).



- **Alternate Day Fasting (ADF):** You fast every other day, eating very few calories on fasting days (less than 25% of your normal needs).
- **OMAD (One Meal a Day):** You eat only one meal a day.

## Important considerations and tips:

- **Hydration:** Drink enough water, black coffee, and tea (without sugar and milk) during fasting periods.
- **Listen to your body:** Not everyone reacts the same to intermittent fasting. Some people experience hunger, irritability, or fatigue. Adjust your schedule if necessary.
- **Not for everyone:** Intermittent fasting is not suitable for everyone, such as pregnant women, people with eating disorders, people with certain medical conditions, or people who use certain medication.
- **Consult a professional:** Before you start intermittent fasting, it is always advisable to seek advice from a doctor or dietitian, especially if you have underlying health problems.

In short, intermittent fasting can be an effective strategy for weight loss, especially because it can help create a calorie deficit and improve insulin sensitivity. The key to success is consistency and a healthy diet during eating periods.

## Module 3: breasts, clothing & more - practical self-care tips

### Comfort, awareness, and well-being in your daily routine

In addition to the important topics of nutrition and exercise, there are more daily aspects that can contribute to your breast health and well-being. This module focuses on practical tips that you can easily integrate into your routine and debunks common misconceptions.

### The right bra: Comfort first and free lymph flow

For many women, the bra is an indispensable item of clothing. But which bra is actually the best for your breasts? It's not just about aesthetics, but especially about comfort and not obstructing the natural processes in your body, such as the lymph flow.

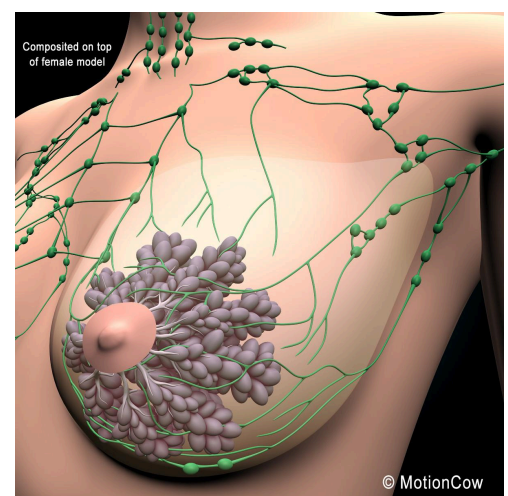
1. **Comfort and fit are crucial:** Always choose a bra that is comfortable and offers good support without pinching or being too tight. A bra that pinches can obstruct the lymph flow. So, focus on wearing comfort!
2. **Pay attention to the construction based on practical experience:** Based on our experience with breast health, we advise you to pay extra attention to bras that do not pinch the lymph flow. Think of models:

**Without underwire:** Underwires can put pressure on the mammary glands and lymph vessels.

**Seamless:** Seamless bras reduce pressure points and friction.

**Without compression:** A good bra should not compress your breasts. They should be able to 'wobble' freely. Wobbling breasts? Yes, definitely! For years, we have been saying that breasts should wobble; what is the story behind this, and why is it important?

The lymph system is our 'garbage collection service'. And just as blood is propelled and pumped around by our heart, the lymph system has no pump in our body. The lymph only starts to flow when we move. Only when we make muscle movements does the lymph start to flow. So, muscle movements are the pump for the lymph. In the picture, you can see how the lymph is distributed over the breast. The threads are lymph vessels, and the dots are lymph nodes. Lymph is located just under the skin and can easily be hindered in its free flow by tight elastic that sits against it (you can see red lines when you take off your bra). That is lymph stagnation. You can get the lymph moving



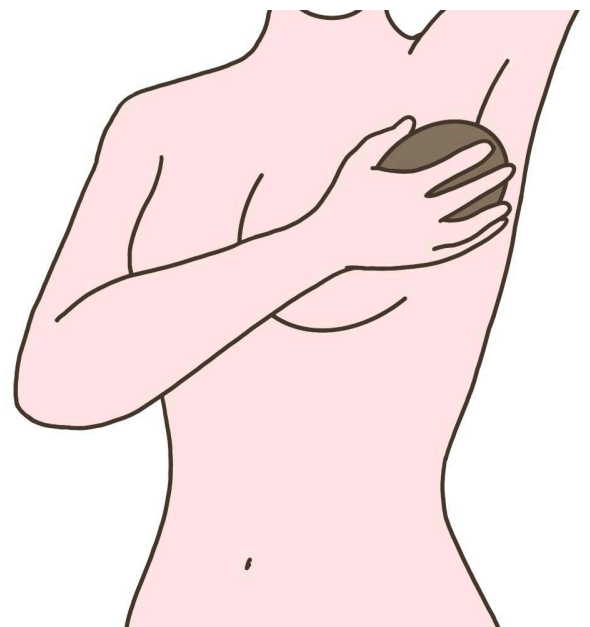
nicely by dry brushing; you can read more about that later. But the most important reason for breasts to have a free flow of lymph is that it must be able to remove waste products from the breasts. Today, we take in too many toxins. If we cannot process them properly, these toxins are stored in fatty tissue where they cannot harm the body. Our breasts are an ideal storage place for three reasons: 1. Breasts are not vital organs. 2. Breasts have a lot of fatty tissue. 3. Breasts are located outside the body, far away from the vital organs. But if breasts are bothered by these waste products, small inflammatory mechanisms can arise. And we don't want that. Breasts cannot move on their own like your arms, and then we also fixate the breasts with a bra, so there is no movement at all. Therefore, it is important to regularly go without a bra. And of course, not to wear one at all at night.

3. **Diversity in models:** You can say that we have 3 types of bras. Choose a bra that suits the moment.
  1. For sports, for example, a good sports bra is essential to support the breasts and allow you to exercise freely.
  2. The everyday bra is seamless and has no underwire. You can see an example of this from the Sloggi Zero Feel.
  3. Then you also have a bra that is "for fun" 😊 and looks good for an occasion under a nice dress.

Choose to go without a bra regularly.

## Dry brushing: A moment of self-care and stimulation

- Dry brushing, the gentle massaging of the skin with a dry brush, has been used for centuries in various cultures. It is a method that is recommended from our practical experience to stimulate the lymph flow. What is the idea behind it? The main advantage we see in practice is supporting lymph drainage, which allows waste products to be better removed from the body. This contributes to a 'cleaner' internal environment and a sense of well-being.
- **A mindful moment:** Dry brushing can be a pleasant moment of self-care and body awareness. It encourages you to connect with your body. You don't have to limit yourself to the breasts; you can brush the entire body.
- **How do you do it?** Use a soft brush with natural bristles. Do this on dry skin, preferably in the morning. Move the brush from your armpit towards your breastbone. Finish the movement by stroking down between your breasts. Repeat this movement about 5 times per side. Also, brush a few times along your collarbone.



Be extra gentle around the breasts and nipples. The pressure should be comfortable

**If you would like to see a video on dry brushing, [click here](#)**

## Breast implants and self-care

Do you have breast implants? Even then, it remains crucial to perform regular self-examinations and to know your breasts well. **See also module 5 about breast implants.**

- **Adjustments in technique:** Your breasts may feel a bit different than without implants. Pay extra attention to the edges of the implant and the breast tissue around it. The steps of looking and feeling remain the same.
- **Importance of check-ups:** Discuss with your doctor which screening methods are most suitable for you. Mammography is not suitable for examining breasts with implants. Examinations such as an ultrasound (ABUS) are very valuable then. With ABUS ultrasound, the implants are fully in view, and it is easy for the radiologist to perform a check. Stay alert for changes and always contact your doctor if in doubt.

## Skin care for your breasts

The skin of your breasts is sensitive and deserves as much attention as the rest of your body.

- **Hydration:** Keep the skin supple and hydrated with a nourishing cream or oil.
- **Sun protection:** Protect your décolleté and breasts from excessive sun exposure to prevent skin aging and damage.

## Castor oil: An old ally for breast health

Castor oil, also known as ricinus oil or 'wonder oil', is a thick, viscous vegetable oil that is rich in omega-6 and omega-9 fatty acids. It has been valued for centuries for its nourishing and supportive properties, both medicinally and in the beauty industry. From our practical experience, we see that this oil can penetrate deep into the skin and support blood flow in the tissue. Women find benefit from using castor oil to soothe areas where they feel tension or mild congestion buildup.

### Your tips for using castor oil on your breasts:

1. Choose wisely: Always buy good quality organic castor oil, preferably in a glass bottle.
2. Warm the oil: Briefly place the bottle in a bowl of warm water before using. This makes the oil more pleasant to use and helps it absorb.
3. Preparation: Shower briefly and rinse; slightly damp skin absorbs the oil better.



4. Apply: Take a small amount the size of a 2-euro coin of warm castor oil in your hands. Spread it over your neck and breasts, and also rub some on your stomach, near your ovaries (do not use this during your period).

## **The Massage – Step by Step:**

5. Neck: Start at your neck. Hold the front of your neck between your thumb and fingers under your chin. Massage in a circular motion towards your thyroid gland (a little lower) and rub the oil in well. Then spread your fingers of both hands, fingertips up, and stroke the entire area from your chin down towards your collarbones. Also include the sides of your neck.
6. Breasts: Move to your breasts and massage them with both hands. One hand above and one hand below your breast, massage from left to right, including the sides, massaging all around. With four fingers, massage in small circles at the top and bottom of your breasts towards the edges of your breasts and rub towards your armpits. Also rub from the center of your breasts towards your armpits.
7. Loving Pressure: Finally, grasp your breast with both hands, one at the bottom and the other at the top, and press firmly. Not too firm, it shouldn't hurt, but more like a gentle "mammogram."
8. Abdomen (Ovaries): Then massage your abdomen around your ovaries.
9. Why these areas? From our practical experience, we see that these three areas (cervical/thyroid, breasts, abdomen/ovaries) can greatly benefit from improved circulation. This massage can improve the flow and function of everything.

## **Your daily awareness:**

### **A little effort makes a big difference**

These tips will remind you how easy it can be to consciously focus on the health and well-being of your breasts every day. By embracing these small habits, you'll strengthen your connection with your body and actively contribute to your overall vitality.

## Module 4: When and Where? - The Role of Professional Research

Your self-care and advanced medical checkups:

Together for optimal breast health

You now have a wealth of information and practical tips on how you can actively contribute to your breast health. However, it's important to understand that this self-care, however valuable, is a supplement to regular medical checkups and professional screenings. Your own vigilance and the expertise of the medical community together form the strongest team for your breast health.

Why preventive screenings from age 30+ is so important: Breast health deserves attention at any age. Although population screening with mammography is only offered in most countries from age 50 onwards, we strongly believe in the power of prevention and screenings starting at age 30. The main reason for this is that women often experience dense breast tissue at a younger age. With dense breast tissue, mammography can be difficult to accurately visualize any abnormalities. And it's crucial to detect abnormalities quickly because tumors are often more aggressive and multiply more rapidly at a younger age than at an older age. For example, research shows that a woman with breast cancer at age 40 has a worse prognosis than if she were 70. This is one of the reasons we want to inform young women in particular about the many breast health tips.

This is where advanced, radiation-free methods that we embrace come into play:



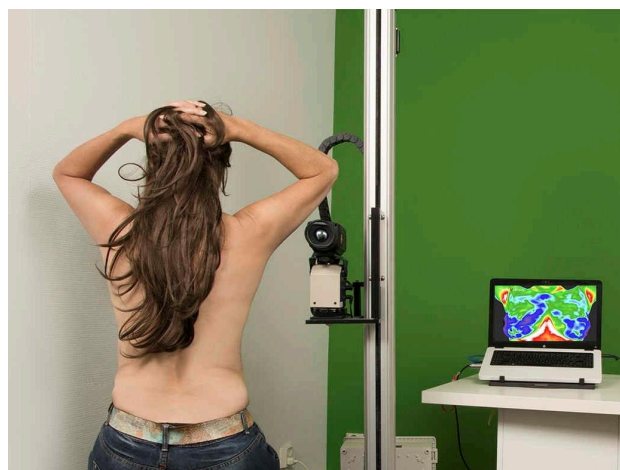
### ABUS (Automated Breast UltraSound): The power of ultrasound

ABUS is a specialized, automated ultrasound technique that uses sound waves to create a detailed 3D image of the entire breast. The major advantage of ABUS is that it is not affected by dense breast tissue. This means that, unlike other methods, ABUS can also provide a complete and reliable image in

(young) women with dense breast tissue or in women with breast implants. The examination is comfortable, radiation-free, and offers a valuable addition to your self-examination.

## Medical Thermography: Early Signals through Patterns

Medical thermography is a non-invasive, radiation-free method that measures and visualizes temperature asymmetries on the skin surface of the breasts. This method focuses on physiological changes and is independent of breast tissue density. It can provide an important insight and is a valuable tool in identifying changes.



## When should you contact your GP?

This is an important message we want to share with you: don't hesitate to go. If you notice a change during your self-exam that is new, persistent, or that worries you (such as a lump, a change in the skin or nipple, or persistent pain – as described in Module 1), contact your GP. Your GP is your first point of contact and can assess whether further testing is necessary and what steps should be taken.

We believe that every woman, regardless of age or breast tissue density, should have access to the safest and most effective methods for breast health. **That's why we're committed to** offering advanced, radiation-free, and complementary screening methods such as ABUS and thermography. These tests, in addition to regular screening, can provide a more complete picture and contribute to even earlier detection.

**Your health deserves the best care, and that starts with you!**

# Module 5: The Downside of Breast Implants.

## Make informed choices

Breast implants can be a deeply personal choice for many women, contributing to their self-image and well-being. However, as with any medical procedure, it's essential to be fully aware of all the potential implications, both short-term and long-term. In our practical experience, we see that more and more women are experiencing the less-publicized aspects of breast implants.

## Short-term and long-term complications and risks:

Although most procedures go well, there are risks and complications that can occur:

- **Pain and tenderness:** Pain in the breasts or around the implants.
- **Infections:** As with any surgical procedure, there is a risk of infection, even long after the operation.
- **Scar tissue:** Formation of capsular contracture, where the scar tissue around the implant tightens and changes the shape of the breast. This capsule is often filled with silicone molecules.
- **Leakage or sweating:** Sooner or later, silicone molecules will be released from all implants and travel through the body, potentially causing symptoms. These symptoms can vary because the types of tissues the molecules end up in can vary.
- **Rupture:** Implants can rupture, which can lead to the contents of the implant coming into contact with body tissue. This can result in a larger amount of silicone being released into the body, which can lead to symptoms. A ruptured implant must always be removed and/or replaced.
- **Breast/nipple changes:** Permanent changes to the nipple, or the inability to breastfeed. Need for new procedures: Implants are not permanent; they may need to be replaced over time with a new procedure.
- **Higher risk of specific cancers:** An increased risk of rare forms of blood and lymphoma (such as BIA-ALCL).

**Systemic symptoms:** Breast Implant Illness (BII) In addition to the more common local complications, a growing number of women with breast implants are experiencing a wide range of systemic symptoms, often collectively known as Breast Implant Illness (BII). These symptoms can vary and significantly impact quality of life.

### Symptoms reported include:

- **Chronic fatigue and brain fog:** Persistent fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and memory loss.
- **Joint and muscle complaints:** Pain in joints, muscles, shoulders, hips, and back.

- **Hormonal imbalance:** Symptoms range from irregular periods and low libido to thyroid disorders and adrenal fatigue.
- **Immune system-related complaints:** Think of inflammation, persistent bacterial and viral infections, fungal infections (such as Candida), skin rashes, and sudden food allergies. There are even reports of symptoms resembling fibromyalgia, Lyme disease, or rheumatoid arthritis.
- **Skin and hair problems:** Hair loss, dry skin and hair, and premature aging.
- **Mental and emotional impact:** Feelings of depression and panic attacks.
- **Other complaints:** Headaches, heart palpitations, weight problems, sleep problems, digestive problems, dizziness, and swelling of lymph nodes. High concentrations of platinum (platinum is used in the production of silicone breast implants) have also been measured in women with silicone implants and children who were breastfed at the time of implant placement.

Your choice, your health:

## The importance of information and monitoring

If you're considering breast implants, it's crucial to thoroughly inform yourself about both the aesthetic benefits and the potential risks. If you're experiencing discomfort, insecurity, or other issues, there are things you can do to address them. Hypnotherapy, coaching, and homeopathy, for example, have shown excellent results. One advantage is that you don't introduce silicone into your body, which can cause discomfort.

If you already have implants and experience any of the above symptoms, it's important to discuss them with your doctor.

Furthermore, implants can complicate mammographic examinations. Therefore, methods such as ultrasound with ABUS (Automated Breast Ultrasound) and medical thermography are safe exams.

**Your well-being is priority. Be informed and take charge of your health. And discuss this information with your friends. Prevention is better than cure.**



# Your healthy future starts today

## You're in charge!

You've just taken a deep dive into the world of breast health, armed with valuable knowledge and practical tips. We firmly believe that by getting to know your breasts, living consciously, and being mindful, you have a tremendous impact on your own well-being. You're no longer a passive recipient of care, but an active partner in your health journey. This guide is your starting point for a lifetime of conscious self-care.

## Stay involved and share your knowledge

Stay curious, keep educating yourself, and feel free to share the insights you've gained with women around you. Together, we can raise awareness and contribute to a healthier future for everyone. Your health is worth it, and so is the health of all the women around you!