

King Saud University

College of Medicine

Department of Medical Education

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**Breast Examination**

**OBJECTIVE:** To properly conduct a breast examination.

**MATERIALS:** Gloves, Swabs and Cytology slides.

 ***D: Appropriately done PD: Partially done ND: Not done/Incorrectly done***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **STEP/TASK** | **D** | **PD** | **ND** |
|  | **Preparation**  |  |  |  |
|  | Introduce yourself to the patient. |  |  |  |
|  | Confirm patient’s ID. |  |  |  |
|  | Explain the procedure to the patient. Stressing that modesty will be ensured and that the examination is usually painless. |  |  |  |
|  | Get patient’s consent. |  |  |  |
|  | Ask for a Chaperone. |  |  |  |
|  | Wash hands. |  |  |  |
|  | Prepare the necessary materials. |  |  |  |
|  | Ensure the privacy of the patient. |  |  |  |
|  | Ask the patient to undress from the waist up. Hand her a drape/blanket to protect her modesty. |  |  |  |
|  | Ask her to sit on the edge of the couch and ensure that she is comfortable. |  |  |  |
|  | **Procedure** |  |  |  |
|  | **General inspection** |  |  |  |
|  | From a distance, observe the patient’s general appearance, state of general health, obvious signs that can be apparent on inspection. Pallor and Jaundice. |  |  |  |
|  | **Local Examination** |  |  |  |
|  | **Inspection** |  |  |  |
|  | Position the patient to sit upright with her chest fully exposed. |  |  |  |
|  | Look at the nipples for:* Retraction, Redness or Bleeding around the area.

Any visible discharge. |  |  |  |
|  | Look at the skin for:* Any visible veins, skin dimpling, peau d’ orange (edematous skin pitted by sweat glands)
* Ask the patient to lift up both her breasts to inspect the area hidden under the mammary folds.
 |  |  |  |
|  | Ask the patient to raise her arms above her head and lower slowly to look for:* Tethering of the nipples or skin, Shift in position of the nipples or a fixed mass distorting the shape of the breast.

Note for any apparent masses in the Axilla. |  |  |  |
|  | Ask the patient to rest her hands on her hips and press her hands against her hips. Check for:Any Dimpling or Fixation |  |  |  |
|  | **🡺 *Continues on the next page*** |  |  |  |
|  | **Palpation of the Breast** |  |  |  |
|  | Warm your hands |  |  |  |
|  | Ask the patient to lie down. If the breasts are large you may ask the patient to place her hand on her forehead when you are examining the lateral side and bring her elbow to level with her shoulder when examining the medial side. |  |  |  |
|  | Ensure that there is no chest/breast pain. |  |  |  |
|  | Gently and using the pulp of your 3 middle fingers: * Starting with the normal breast
* Palpate each quadrant 3 times with increasing pressure towards the chest wall. Using an even rotary movement.
 |  |  |  |
|  | Check the concentric trail. |  |  |  |
|  | If a mass is found, assess for:* Position (in terms of quadrant and proximity to the nipples), Size, Shape, and Consistency, Tenderness, Fixation to the skin and the Amount of lesions.
 |  |  |  |
|  | **Palpation of the Nipple** |  |  |  |
|  | Inspect the patient’s face *(sclerae, pupils, malar rush, mouth, palate, dentition).* |  |  |  |
|  | Hold the Nipple between the thumb and the forefinger and gently compress it to express any discharge. Alternatively, you can ask the patient to express any discharge she might have. |  |  |  |
|  | Any fluid discharged should be Swabbed for Microbiology Investigations and Smeared for Cytology. |  |  |  |
|  | Feel the area behind the Nipples for any Lumps. |  |  |  |
|  | **Palpation of the Axillae** |  |  |  |
|  | Ask the patient to sit up at the side of the bedMake sure she is comfortable, explain to her how you are going to examine her axillae and why |  |  |  |
|  | Hold the left hand arm of the patient with your left hand asking the patient to relax at the shoulder and let her arm rest on yours |  |  |  |
|  | Palpate the left axilla with your right hand, feeling for any masses with the tip of the fingers in a rolling motion all around.Repeat with the other hand on the other side in the same way |  |  |  |
|  | End the examination with palpation of the supraclavicular fossa with behind asking the patient to hunch her shoulders up and relax the neck muscles. |  |  |  |
|  | **After the Examination** |  |  |  |
|  | Cover up the patient. |  |  |  |
|  | Thank the patient and Ensure her comfort. |  |  |  |
|  | Explain to the patient what has been done and answer any of her questions. |  |  |  |
|  | Document the examination. |  |  |  |
|  | Wash hands. |  |  |  |
|  | Summarize your findings, offer a differential diagnosis and recommend any other investigations if appropriate. E.g. Mammogram, USS or Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology. |  |  |  |

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