



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Food and Drug Administration

FDA approves “The Touch Enhancing Pad” for breast self-examination.

For the first time, the Food and Drug Administration has approved a non-prescription breast self-examination (BSE) pad for at-home use. “The BSE Pad” is composed of two plastic sheets (eight inches in diameter) with a small amount of liquid lubricant sealed inside. When used properly by a woman during her monthly BSE, the pad reduces the friction between her fingers and breast and enhances her sense of touch during the exam.

“BSE is a simple test women can do to maintain breast health and statistics show women still don’t do it on a routine basis,” says Katherine Alley, MD, and Director of The Breast Center at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. “‘The BSE Pad’ aid can help women feel more confident in their ability to conduct exams by making it easier and more comfortable for them.” The ultra-thin, soft-plastic breast pad may be reused each month. The pad is a medical device which is composed of soft ultra-thin latex-free polyurethane, comes with a step-by-step reference guide and easy to understand audiotape or CD narrated by Dr Christa Corn a General Surgeon and Breast Cancer Surgery Specialist.

A clinical trial conducted with seventy-two breast cancer patients revealed that patients who used “The BSE Pad” were able to use the product as effectively as nurses familiar with the proper breast examination technique. A similar study showed that women who used “The BSE Pad” had higher tactile awareness than with a bare hand or with soapy water (simulating BSE in the shower).

Routine breast self-examination helps women become familiar with how their breasts normally feel, making it easier to detect any changes that may occur. According to the American Cancer Society, when breast cancer is discovered early and confined to the breast, the five-year survival rate is over ninety-six percent. Early detection of breast cancer helps reduce the need for therapeutic treatment and minimizes pain and suffering. Some studies estimate breast cancer mortality can be reduced by as much as eighteen percent through increased use of BSE.

The American Cancer Society recommends that all women 18 years of age and older should perform monthly breast self-exams.

Presently, seventy one million American women do not perform BSE for a variety of reasons including lack of confidence, not knowing what to look for, limited tactile sensitivity with a bare hand, fear of finding an abnormality, and discomfort in touching their own breasts. Although ninety-six percent of women are aware of the importance of BSE, only twenty-nine percent perform self-exams on a regular basis. “When I first brought home “The BSE Pad”, I didn’t use it for six months because I didn’t feel confident that I would be able to detect a lump on my own,” said Mary Gorman of Chevy Chase, Maryland. “Once I started using it, I was amazed at how the pad was able to enhance my sense of touch. “The BSE Pad” helped me find a lump that both a mammogram and my doctor had missed.”

To use “The BSE Pad” correctly, women should examine their breasts standing up, lying down, and before a mirror. Many women who conduct monthly BSE only do so in the shower and therefore do not complete a thorough examination