

Breast Lumps or Masses

What Is It?



- **Most Breast Lumps**- or breast pain are not serious. At different ages, women may experience breast changes: these may occur during the menstrual cycle, during pregnancy, and with aging. Changing levels of hormones cause the breast tissue to increase and the glands that produce milk(mammary glands) to grow. Lumps and changes may be more noticeable to thin women and those with smaller breasts. Cancer is a big concern to women, but is very seldom the cause of isolated breast pain.

Symptoms

- **If you have a lump in your breast, the doctor will most likely look for:**
 - **Cysts**- these are lumps filled with fluid.
 - **Fibrocystic Changes**- these are usually benign(noncancerous); usually this occurs in the upper and outer breast tissue. These changes can be located in one breast or both.
 - **Breast Cancer**- Some lumps are cancerous, the risk factors include:age,heredity(mother or sister having breast cancer), or hormones (menstrual period at an early age, first pregnancy after age 30 or late menopause). Most cancer occurs in women over 50, and a very small amount occurs in women(2%)under 30 years of age.
 - **Nipple Discharge**- this may be a sign of infection, but could be an indicator of cancer. Your health care provider will analyze the discharge to determine the difference.
 - **Skin Changes**- Dimpling or other changes of the skin of the breast may be a sign of cancer.

What Can I Do? :

- **See a Health Care Professional**- when you find a lump or mass in your breast(s). One week after your menstrual period is a good time to go for medical care. Describe the lump or mass and any other changes you have noticed (skin changes, drainage, or discharge, how the lump feels, if the lump moves around, pain, etc.), any medications or vitamin supplements that may help with the pain or reduce the lumps
- **Treatment**- Once It is determined what the cause of the lump or mass in your breast(s), your health care provider with discuss the options available to you.
- **Older than 35**- have an annual mammogram. Complete self breast examinations monthly.
- **Talked to a Registered Dietitian**- about foods low in caffeine, Talk to your health care provider about any medications or vitamin supplements that may help with the pain or reduce the lumps.