



Fibrocystic Changes

What are benign breast lumps?

The most common breast problem is a benign condition called fibrocystic changes. Benign means that the condition is not a cancer. There are several types of fibrocystic changes for example:

- large cysts- lumps that are filled with fluid
- nodular fibroglandular tissue - a condition that may cause a painful lump on the upper outer part of the breast
- fibroadenomas - hard round lumps that feel like a small marble and move around easily

Most breast lumps, especially in younger women, are benign, but it is important for women of any age to let their primary care doctor know about any discrete lump they may have. Your doctor will examine the lump and determine if further evaluation is needed.

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms of fibrocystic change include pain and tenderness, usually in both breasts. However, some women with fibrocystic changes do not have any pain but notice lumps or nodules within the breast.
- In some women, one or both breasts may develop lumps and become most tender 7 - 14 days before the start of each menstrual period. Breast pain occurs most often in the upper, outer part of the breast.
- If you have persistent breast pain, sense a change in the breast, or notice a more prominent lump, bring it to the attention of your doctor.

When is the best time to schedule my breast exam?

It is best to have your breasts examined one week following the end of your menstrual period. If you are in menopause and do not get your period anymore this will not apply to you.

When should I see my doctor?

See your doctor if you have breast pain that is not cyclical (recurs periodically on a consistent basis) or if you have breast pain that appears in a specific spot (localized). Your primary care doctor needs to examine all definite lumps or masses that appear in the breast.

If you have any new concerns or questions, call the clinic and talk to a nurse or your clinician.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan. UMHS does not recommend unsupervised management of health issues.

Patient Education Handout associated with UMHS Clinical Care Guideline

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#). Last Revised 7/13.