



Breast lumps

Feeling a lump in a breast can be scary. For a lot of women, the first thought is cancer. The good news is that 80% to 90% of breast lumps are not cancer. If you feel a lump in your breast, don't panic! Call your doctor.

SIGNS, SYMPTOMS & CAUSES

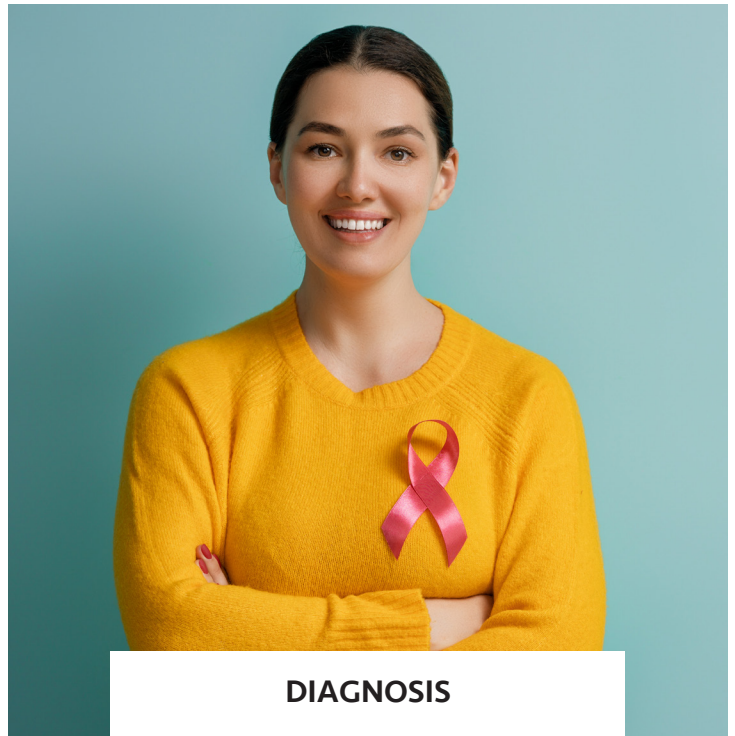
Solid tumors. These include:

- **Lipomas.** These are fatty tumors that can grow very large. They are usually benign.
- **Fibroadenomas.** These lumps are round, solid, and movable and are usually benign.
- **Cancerous lumps.** Often, these are firm to hard masses that do not move when felt. They are often an irregular shape.

Cysts. (These can be very small and diffuse, as in fibrocystic breast disease). These cysts:

- Are fluid filled sacs.
- Are painful and feel lumpy or tender.
- Can occur near the surface of the skin of the breast and/or be deep within the breast. This second type may need to be tested with a biopsy to make sure it is benign.

Nipple-duct tumors. These tumors occur within the part of the nipple that milk flows through. They cause a discharge from the nipple. These tumors should be removed by surgery. In rare cases, a bloody discharge from the nipple could be a sign of cancer.

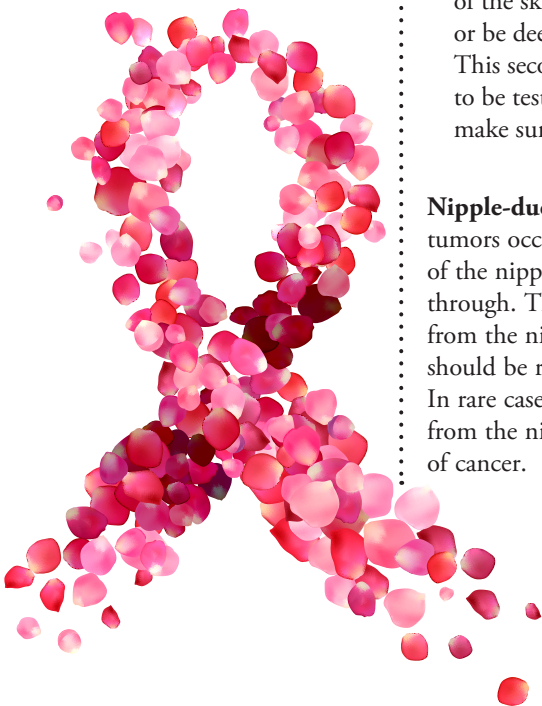


DIAGNOSIS

TESTS CAN BE DONE TO HELP DIAGNOSE WHETHER OR NOT A BREAST LUMP IS BENIGN.

- **Mammogram.** This X-ray of the breast can detect breast problems before they can be felt.
- **Ultrasound.** This tells whether the lump is fluid-filled (usually harmless) or solid.
- **Needle aspiration.** With this, a needle is put into the lump to remove fluid or cells.
- **Biopsy.** There are many types. With these, a sample of the breast tissue is taken and examined.
- **Ductal lavage.** Fluid is sent through a catheter to the milk ducts. Cells inside the milk ducts are collected and checked for the risk of breast cancer.

Benign breast lumps may go away if you breastfeed for many months or take a low-dose birth control pill. Prescribed medicines can get rid of severe breast lumps. These have side effects, though.





SELF-CARE

Fibrocystic Breasts

- Get to and stay at a healthy body weight.
- Follow a low saturated fat diet. Eat soy foods.
- Do regular exercise. This can promote blood flow to your breasts.
- Limit or have no caffeine.
- Limit salt and sodium intake. This helps prevent fluid buildup in the breasts.
- Don't smoke. Don't use nicotine gum or patches.
- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever.
- Take vitamin E, as advised by your doctor.
- Wear a bra that provides good support. You may want to wear it while you sleep, too.

Breast Pain and/or Swelling without Lesions or Redness

- For pain due to trauma or surgery, apply cold packs for the first 48 hours. Do this every 2 to 4 hours for 10 to 15 minutes at a time. After 48 hours, apply heat, such as a hot water bottle. Do this 4 times a day for 10 to 15 minutes at a time.
- For pain not due to trauma or injury, apply warm heat. Use a heating pad set on low or a hot water bottle. Do this for 30 minutes. Then apply an ice pack for 10 minutes. Repeat as often as needed.
- Take vitamins, as advised by your doctor.
- Take an over-the-counter medicine for pain and swelling, as directed.