

# If You Find A **BREAST LUMP OR CHANGE**



## Family Health History Tool

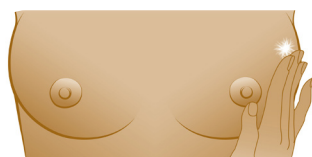
To help record and organize your family health history, the My [Family Health History](#) tool on [komen.org](#) can be used as a resource to help gather information that will be useful as you talk with your doctor about your risk of breast cancer.

## I've found a lump or change in my breast. Now what?

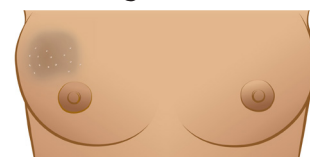
Though it's normal to worry, most lumps are not cancer. And, some lumps go away on their own. For example, in premenopausal women, lumps are often related to monthly periods. These lumps can go away by the end of the menstrual cycle.

A lump and other changes in the breast or underarm area could be signs of breast cancer though. See a doctor if you notice any of these changes:

Lump, hard knot or thickening inside the breast or underarm area



Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast



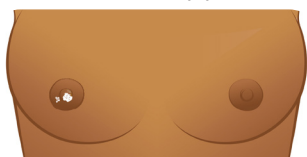
Change in the size or shape of the breast



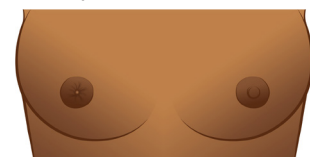
Dimpling or puckering of the skin



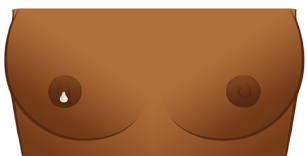
Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple



Pulling in of your nipple or other parts of the breast



Nipple discharge that starts suddenly



New pain in one spot that does not go away



## What will your doctor do?

Your doctor will ask you about your personal and family medical history. They will also ask you about what you found. Show your doctor exactly where the lump or other change is in your breast. A doctor can tell a lot about a lump from its size, texture and movement within the breast. Benign (not cancer) lumps often feel different from breast cancer.

This fact sheet is intended to be a brief overview. For more information, visit [komen.org](#) or call the Komen Patient Care Center's Breast Care Helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET and Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. ET or email at [helpline@komen.org](mailto:helpline@komen.org). Se habla español.

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## Resources

**Susan G. Komen®**  
1-877 GO KOMEN  
(1-877-465-6636)  
[komen.org](https://www.komen.org)

**The Komen Patient Care Center** can provide breast cancer information, services and resources.

Our navigators offer free, personalized support to patients, caregivers and family members, including education, emotional support, financial assistance, help accessing care and more.

Get connected to a Komen navigator by contacting the Breast Care Helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) or email [helpline@komen.org](mailto:helpline@komen.org) to get started.

## Related online resources:

- [Benign Breast Conditions in Women](#)
- [Breast Biopsy](#)
- [Breast Cancer Screening and Follow-up Tests](#)
- [Questions to Ask Your Doctor: If You Find a Lump or Change in Your Breast](#)

## How is a benign breast lump treated?

A breast lump may be a [benign breast condition](#) that may or may not need to be treated. You may need follow-up tests to learn more about the lump or change. For example, cysts (liquid-filled sacs) often don't need treatment. Other benign breast lumps may need to be removed with surgery but require no further treatment.

## What kind of follow-up tests will I need?

Your doctor will decide which follow-up tests are needed. You may have a:

- **Mammogram** uses X-rays to create an image of the breast. When used as a follow-up test, it's called a diagnostic mammogram. The basic procedure is the same as a screening mammogram, but more views are usually taken with a diagnostic mammogram.
- **Breast ultrasound** uses sound waves to make images of the breast. It can show the difference between a liquid-filled cyst and a solid mass.
- **Breast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** uses magnetic fields to create an image of the breast. It can sometimes find breast cancer that's not seen on a mammogram.

## What can follow-up tests show?

The results of follow-up tests may show:

- No signs of breast cancer. You return to your normal screening plan.
- A benign breast condition. Some types may need treatment.
- The abnormal finding is probably not cancer. You need to return for follow-up when your doctor recommends it.
- The abnormal finding could be cancer, and a biopsy will be needed to confirm or rule out cancer.

## What is a biopsy?

If the lump is solid and the follow-up tests cannot rule out breast cancer, a [biopsy](#) may be done. It removes some cells or a small amount of tissue. The tissue is examined under a microscope to see if it contains cancer. Usually, a needle biopsy is done first. There's a small chance a needle biopsy can miss the suspicious area. This is less likely when the lump can be felt and when the biopsy is guided with a breast ultrasound, breast MRI or a special type of mammography called stereotactic mammography.

If your doctor finds nothing abnormal, but you still feel something is wrong, it's a good idea to get a [second opinion](#). Although a lump or change may be nothing to worry about, it's best to be sure.

If the biopsy results show breast cancer, you'll be connected with a doctor who can help you understand your diagnosis and treatment options.

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