

FAQs

Benign Breast Conditions

Frequently Asked Questions

What is

A benign breast condition is a lump or change in their ovaries, uterus, or breasts that does not affect your risk of cancer. It can be found during a routine exam with your doctor.



We Use Cookies

ACOG uses cookies, pixels and similar technologies to personalize your website experience. By clicking "continue" or continuing to use our site, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

What are

Benign breast conditions are lumps and skin changes.

[Continue](#)

What causes benign breast pain?

There are two types of breast pain: cyclic and noncyclic.

- Cyclic breast pain is related to changes in [hormone](#) levels, including the [menstrual cycle](#), [hormonal birth control](#), or [hormone therapy](#) for [menopause](#). Symptoms may include sharp pain, burning, or itching. One breast may hurt more than the other. The symptoms are often worse right before the [menstrual period](#) starts and get better after bleeding begins.
- Noncyclic breast pain is not related to the menstrual cycle. It usually occurs in one breast in one specific area. You may feel pain all the time, or it may come and go. Many things can cause this type of pain, including injury, infection, medications, and

large breast size. In rare cases, noncyclic breast pain can be caused by breast cancer.

What should I do if I have benign breast pain?

For cyclic breast pain, these steps may help:

- Wear a well-fitted bra
- If you use combined hormonal birth control, using it continuously may improve symptoms. Talk with your ob-gyn if you want to learn more about this option.
- Take an over-the-counter pain reliever. If your pain is severe, your ob-gyn may prescribe medications for a short time.

If you l

What a

There
divided

We Use Cookies

ACOG uses cookies, pixels and similar technologies to personalize your website experience. By clicking "continue" or continuing to use our site, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

1. N
fil
m
If

2. **Proliferative without atypia** –In this type of breast mass, the cells are increasing in number but are otherwise normal. Having this type of mass slightly increases the risk of future breast cancer. These masses may be surgically removed, but sometimes they can just be watched to make sure they are not growing.
3. **Atypical hyperplasia of the breast** –In this type of mass, the cells are not normal and are increasing in number. Having this type of mass greatly increases the risk of future breast cancer. It is recommended that you have surgery to remove the cells and the area around them.

What is mastitis?

Mastitis is an infection of the breast tissue. It most often happens during breastfeeding, when a milk duct becomes clogged with milk and does not drain properly. Mastitis can cause flu-like symptoms, such as fever, aches, and fatigue. Your breast may be red, swollen, warm, and painful in one specific area.

How is mastitis treated?

You may be prescribed an [antibiotic](#) to treat the infection. It is safe to breastfeed your baby when you have mastitis and are taking an antibiotic. In fact, breastfeeding may help you heal faster. Applying warm compresses can help relieve the pain.

What are the signs and symptoms of nipple discharge?

Benign
squeezed
is more

We Use Cookies

What c
During
you ar
medic

ACOG uses cookies, pixels and similar technologies to personalize your website experience. By clicking "continue" or continuing to use our site, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

What s

Breast

and allergic reactions. Yeast infection of the skin folds under the breast is a common condition. If you have larger breasts, you are more likely to have skin yeast infections.

Some skin changes of the breast raise concern for cancer. These include redness, warmth, dimpling of the skin, and ulcers (small, red, painful blisters). Nipple changes such as crusting, scaling, or a nipple that has changed shape also raise concern. Tell your ob-gyn about any skin changes that you notice.

How are benign breast conditions diagnosed?

If you have breast symptoms, talk with your ob-gyn. Your ob-gyn should ask you questions about when your symptoms started, how severe they are, and whether you

have felt a mass or lump. You should also be asked about your risk factors for breast cancer.

You likely will have a breast exam. In some cases, you may need to have an imaging test of your breast. Breast imaging can be done with **mammography**, an **ultrasound exam**, or **magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)**. Imaging may be followed by a **biopsy**.

How are benign breast conditions treated?

Results of biopsy and imaging tests are used to decide on a course of treatment. Other factors, such as your age and breast cancer risk, may be considered too.

For some breast masses or areas that have abnormal cells, your health care professional may recommend surgery. This is called a **breast biopsy**. In other cases,

We Use Cookies

ACOG uses cookies, pixels and similar technologies to personalize your website experience. By clicking "continue" or continuing to use our site, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

What is breast self-awareness?

Breast self-awareness means being aware of how your breasts normally look and feel. Knowing what is normal for you can help you detect any changes that may signal a problem. Call your ob-gyn if you notice

- a new lump
- skin changes
 - thickening
 - dimpling
 - unexplained reddening

- nipple scaling or redness
- ulcers
- pain (especially if it is in one place or is getting worse)

Glossary

Antibiotic: A drug that treats certain types of infections.

Atypical Hyperplasia of the Breast: A condition in which cells in the breast ducts or lobes are increasing in number and do not look normal under a microscope.

Benign: Not cancer.

Biopsy

examin

We Use Cookies

Birth C

ACOG uses cookies, pixels and similar technologies to personalize your website experience. By clicking "continue" or continuing to use our site, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

Cyst: A

Fibroa

Hormone: A substance made in the body that controls the function of cells or organs.

Hormone Therapy: Treatment in which estrogen and often progestin are taken to help relieve symptoms that may happen around the time of menopause.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI): A test to view internal organs and structures by using a strong magnetic field and sound waves.

Mammography: X-rays of the breast that are used to find breast cancer or other breast problems.

Mastitis: Infection of the breast tissue that can occur during breastfeeding.

Menopause: The time when a woman's menstrual periods stop permanently.

Menopause is confirmed after 1 year of no periods.

Menstrual Cycle: The monthly process of changes that occur to prepare a woman's body for possible pregnancy. A menstrual cycle is defined as the first day of menstrual bleeding of one cycle to the first day of menstrual bleeding of the next cycle.

Menstrual Period: The monthly shedding of blood and tissue from the uterus.

Nonproliferative: A term used to describe a noncancerous breast mass that contains normal cells.

Obstetrician–Gynecologist (Ob-Gyn): A doctor with special training and education in

women's

Prolife

which

Ultraso

body. D

If you

Don't h

We Use Cookies

ACOG uses cookies, pixels and similar technologies to personalize your website experience. By clicking "continue" or continuing to use our site, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).

FAQ026

Last updated: May 2023

Last reviewed: January 2023

Copyright 2025 by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. All rights reserved. Read [copyright and permissions information](#).

This information is designed as an educational aid for the public. It offers current information and opinions related to women's health. It is not intended as a statement of the standard of care. It does

not explain all of the proper treatments or methods of care. It is not a substitute for the advice of a physician. Read [ACOG's complete disclaimer](#).

About ACOG

Disclaimer

Contact Us

How to Find an Ob-Gyn



We Use Cookies

ACOG uses cookies, pixels and similar technologies to personalize your website experience. By clicking "continue" or continuing to use our site, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#).