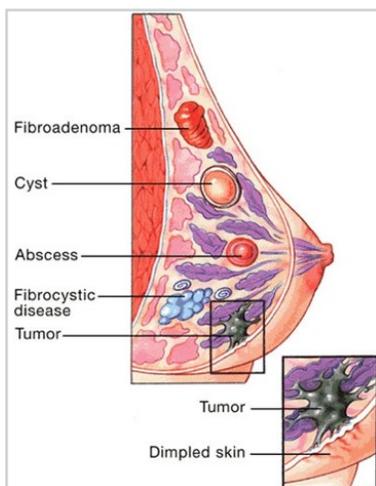


Information About Breast Lumps



You may be concerned if you find a lump in your breast, however, many women have a natural lumpiness to their breasts. The large majority of breast lumps are benign (non-cancerous).

We encourage you to become familiar with your breasts through monthly breast self exams (BSE). If you find a new lump that does not go away after a month you should have a doctor examine your breast.

What is the difference between having a lump in the breast and simply having lumpy breasts??

Women have a natural lumpiness to their breasts. It is recommended that you perform breast self exams on a regular basis so that you become familiar with the normal lumpiness of your breasts and can differentiate any new breast lumps. Breast lumps are common in women ages 30-50 and can be caused by infections, injuries, non-cancerous growths and cancer.

What am I feeling for when I do a Breast Self Exam (BSE)?

It is strongly recommended that women conduct regular breast self-exams in addition to annual mammograms (women over age 40) so they are aware of breast changes and can detect potential issues at an early stage. In a breast self exam you should check for any change in appearance or new lump or thickening. Performing regular breast self exams will help you become more familiar with your breasts so that important changes will be easier to identify. If you are unsure, ask your doctor to show you how to properly perform a breast self exam during your next visit.

What Should I Do If I Find a Lump in My Breast?

Contact your doctor if you find a new breast lump that does not go away during or after your cycle, or if you notice breast lumps after menopause. Again, most breast lumps are not cancerous. After feeling a breast lump your doctor may order additional screenings or a biopsy or refer you to a specialist to help determine the underlying cause of the lump.

Remember: Currently, the American Cancer Society recommends the following screening guidelines:

1. Breast self-exam monthly starting at age 18-20.
2. Clinical breast examination at least every 3 years from ages 20-39; yearly starting at age 40.
3. Annual mammogram at age 40 (may be recommended sooner if family history of breast cancer).

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