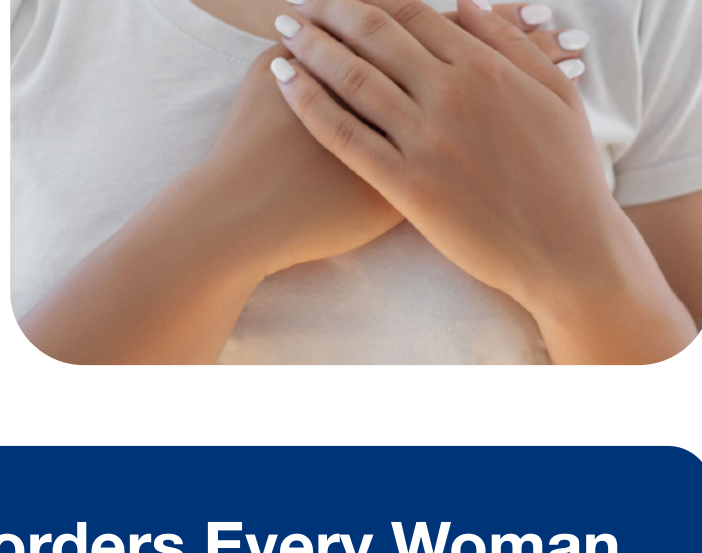


WOMEN'S HEALTH SPOTLIGHT: UNDERSTANDING BREAST DISORDERS

Overview

Breast health plays a crucial part in women's overall health. It is important to remember that there are many types of breast disorders - some are non-cancerous (most common in young women), while others may be more serious, such as breast cancer. This newsletter will provide an overview of common breast disorders, their symptoms, and preventative strategies for early detection for better health outcomes.



Common Breast Disorders Every Woman Should Know

01

Fibrocystic Breast Changes

What it is: A benign (non-cancerous) condition where breasts feel lumpy or rope-like.

Symptoms: Tenderness, swelling, and lumps that may fluctuate with the menstrual cycle.

Tip: Warm compresses and wearing supportive bras can ease discomfort.

02

Breast Cysts

What it is: Fluid-filled sacs within the breast, common in women aged 35–50.

Symptoms: Smooth, easily movable lumps, sometimes painful.

Diagnosis: Ultrasound or aspiration (removing fluid with a needle).

03

Mastitis

What it is: Inflammation or infection of breast tissue, usually in breastfeeding women.

Symptoms: Redness, swelling, fever, and pain.

Care: Warm compresses, continued breastfeeding/pumping, and antibiotics when needed.

04

Fibroadenoma

What it is: A solid, benign breast tumour, common in younger women.

Symptoms: Firm, smooth, and rubbery lumps that move easily under the skin.

Management: Often monitored; sometimes removed if large or uncomfortable.

05

Breast Cancer

What it is: Abnormal growth of breast cells that can spread if untreated.

Warning Signs:

- A hard, irregular lump
- Skin dimpling (like an orange peel)
- Nipple discharge (especially bloody)
- Persistent pain in one area
- Changes in breast size or shape



Breast Cancer Diagnosis

01

Breast self-examination

Self-examination to be performed regularly each month starting at age 20, on the sixth to tenth day after the start of the menstrual cycle. [Read more >](#)

02

Clinical Breast Exam (CE)

- Once every 3 years for women aged 20 years and above.
- Annually for women aged 40 years and above.

03

Mammography

Women aged 40 years and above should undertake a screening mammogram once every 2 years.

04

Imaging Tests

Imaging tests such as X-rays and ultrasound scans are used to examine the breast. Ultrasound relies on high-frequency sound waves to provide a detailed view of the breast tissue structure.

05

Biopsy

Taking a small sample of the breast and testing it under the microscope.

06

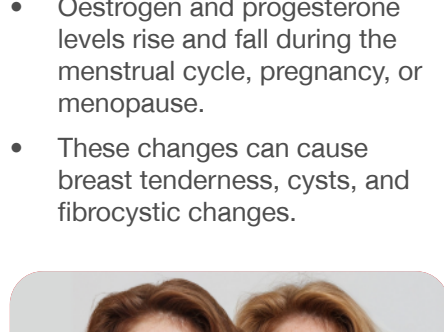
Nipple Discharge Analysis

If nipple discharge is found, a sample is taken to the labs to be examined under the microscope.

For more information visit this link: [Benign Breast Disease: Types, Noncancerous & Treatment](#)

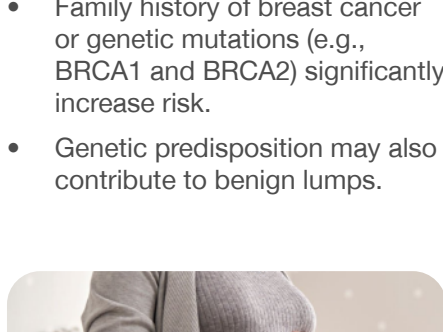
Causes of Breast Disorders

Breast disorders can occur due to a variety of hormonal, genetic, lifestyle, and medical factors. Understanding the root causes helps in prevention and early detection:



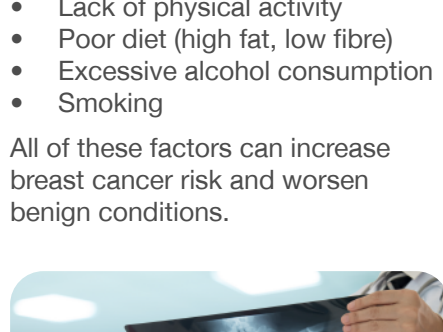
Hormonal Fluctuations

- Oestrogen and progesterone levels rise and fall during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, or menopause.
- These changes can cause breast tenderness, cysts, and fibrocystic changes.



Genetic Factors

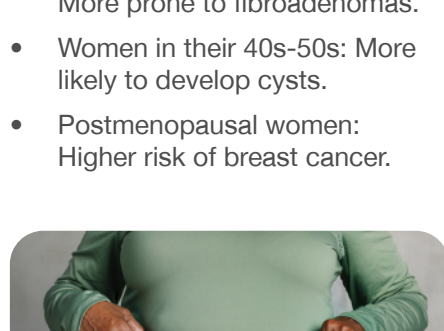
- Family history of breast cancer or genetic mutations (e.g., BRCA1 and BRCA2) significantly increase risk.
- Genetic predisposition may also contribute to benign lumps.



Lifestyle Choices

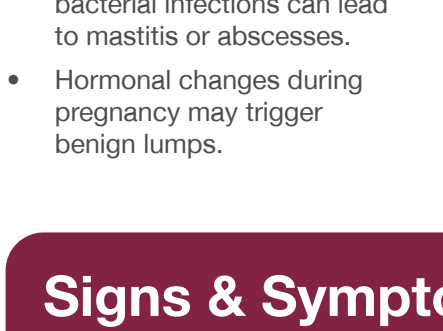
- Lack of physical activity
- Poor diet (high fat, low fibre)
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Smoking

All of these factors can increase breast cancer risk and worsen benign conditions.



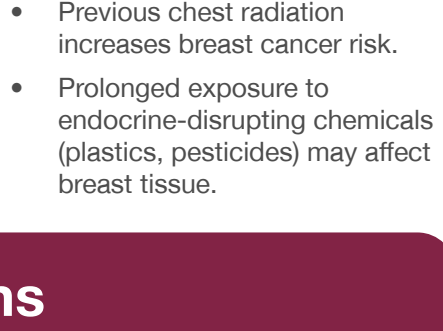
Age and Life Stage

- Younger women (teens to 30s): More prone to fibroadenomas.
- Women in their 40s-50s: More likely to develop cysts.
- Postmenopausal women: Higher risk of breast cancer.



Pregnancy & Breastfeeding

- Blocked milk ducts or bacterial infections can lead to mastitis or abscesses.
- Hormonal changes during pregnancy may trigger benign lumps.



Radiation & Environmental Exposure

- Previous chest radiation increases breast cancer risk.
- Prolonged exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals (plastics, pesticides) may affect breast tissue.



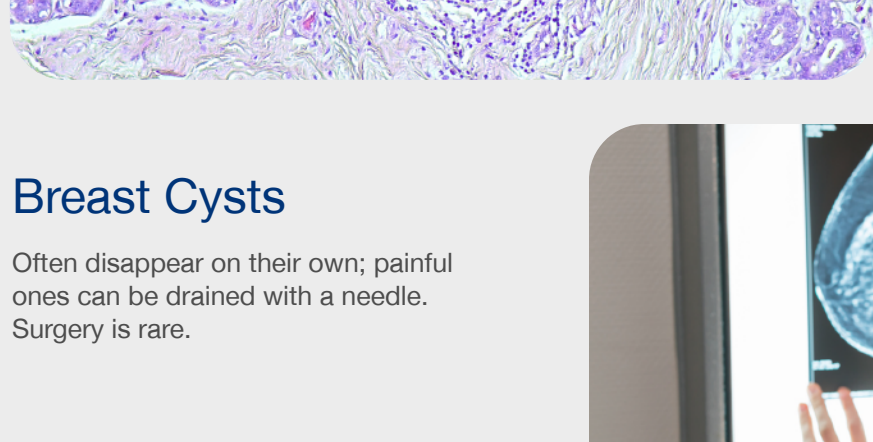
Other Medical Conditions

- Hormonal disorders (thyroid, polycystic ovary syndrome).
- Obesity (extra fat tissue produces oestrogen, fueling abnormal breast growth).
- Certain medications (hormone replacement therapy, oral contraceptives).

Signs & Symptoms

- Changes in breast shape, size or contour.
- Constant breast pain and swelling.
- Nipple discharge.
- Noticing a lump or thickening of the breast.
- Changes of the breast skin: redness, peeling or dimpling.

Treatment of Common Breast Disorders

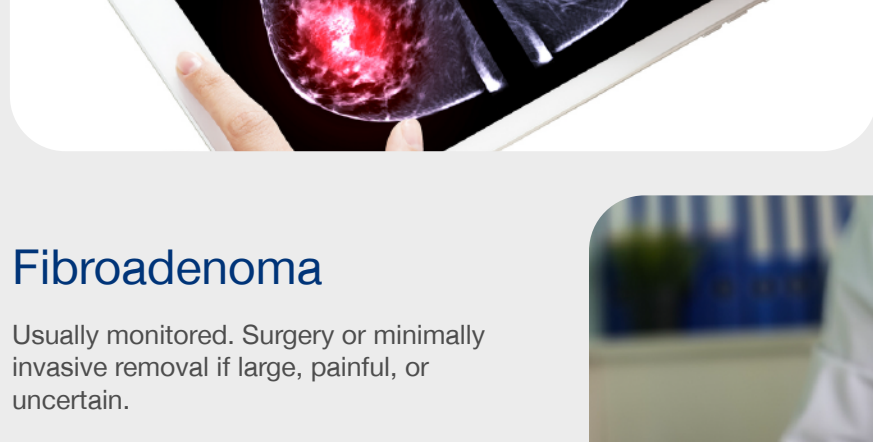
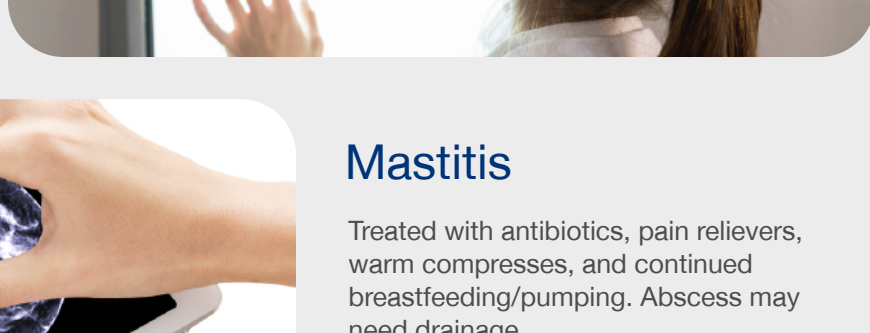


Fibrocystic Breast Changes

No specific treatment; manage with warm compresses, supportive bras, pain relievers, and lifestyle changes (reduce caffeine/salt).

Breast Cysts

Often disappear on their own; painful ones can be drained with a needle. Surgery is rare.

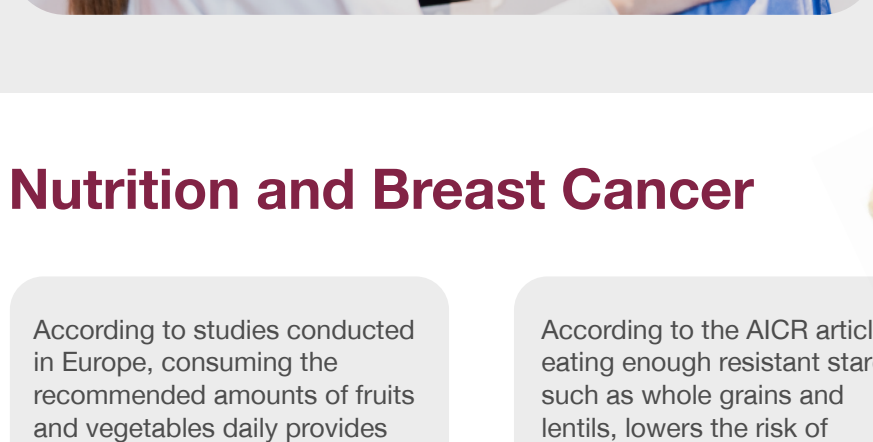
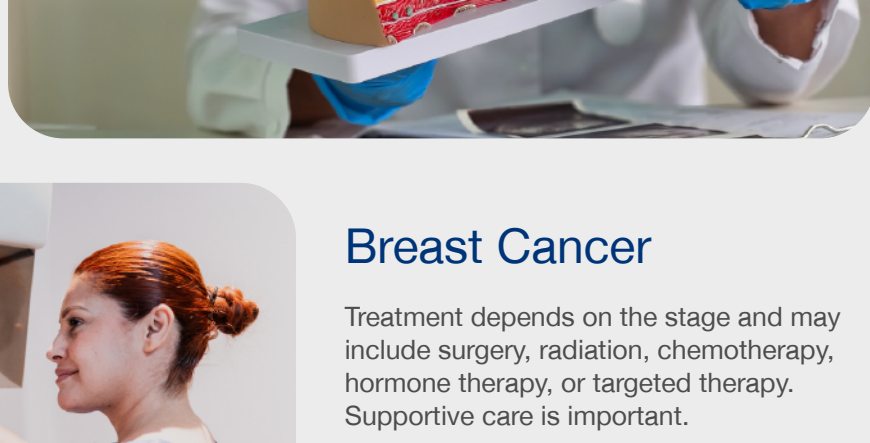


Mastitis

Treated with antibiotics, pain relievers, warm compresses, and continued breastfeeding/pumping. Abscess may need drainage.

Fibroadenoma

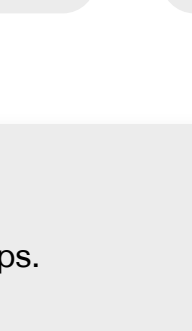
Usually monitored. Surgery or minimally invasive removal if large, painful, or uncertain.



Breast Cancer

Treatment depends on the stage and may include surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, or targeted therapy. Supportive care is important.

Nutrition and Breast Cancer



According to studies conducted in Europe, consuming the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables daily provides antioxidants and fiber, which lowers the risk of breast cancer.

According to the AICR articles, eating enough resistant starch, such as whole grains and lentils, lowers the risk of breast cancer as they contain a lot of fibre.

Spices (garlic, turmeric, ginger, onions) all contain anti-inflammatory inhibitors and anticancer compounds.



Prevention tips

- Schedule a regular clinical appointment for check-ups.
- An at-home self-breast exam is recommended.
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, such as managing weight and food.
- Limiting alcohol and tobacco consumption.
- Breastfeeding is recommended to lower the risk of breast cancer.

Learn more

<https://www.breastcancer.org/benign-breast-conditions>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer-in-women/>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/6270-benign-breast-disease>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/breast-cancer>

Major New Analysis: Fiber May Prevent Breast Cancer - American Institute for Cancer Research

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31931881/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29277346/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28901261/>

American Cancer Society

American Institute for Cancer Research

Breast Cancer