



Breast lumps or lumpy breasts

Performing a monthly self-breast exam helps you become familiar with the texture and cyclical changes of your breasts, including normal breast lumpiness. These essential exams also help with early detection of a breast lump, which may be a lifesaving discovery.

Lumpy breasts

Breast lumpiness may vary from fine irregularities to a coarse or nodular breast texture. Breast lumpiness is often cyclical, meaning it changes during your menstrual cycle along with normal changes in your hormone levels.

For years, women with lumpy breasts were diagnosed with fibrocystic disease. This is not a disease but a condition affecting at least half of all women. Cyclical lumpiness does not usually need treatment.

Breast lumps

A breast lump feels different from cyclical lumpiness. A lump usually feels more distinct from the tissue around it. When you're able to feel a distinct lump in your breast with your fingers, it's called a palpable lump. These lumps can be normal or abnormal and should be checked by your doctor.





What to expect if you find a breast lump

Your doctor may recommend tests to help diagnose your breast lump. Sometimes a lump cannot be seen on a mammogram or ultrasound. Therefore, careful evaluation and monitoring are important.

▲ Mammograms

If you have a mammogram due to a breast lump, a metal marker is taped over the palpable area to assist with the evaluation. The technologist will take special mammography views of the area of interest and surrounding tissue.

▲ Breast ultrasound

Breast ultrasound is often performed to evaluate your breast lump. If an ultrasound shows a simple cyst, no further treatment is needed. If the lump is suspicious or complex, you may have additional tests like an aspiration, a biopsy or a surgical procedure.

▲ Continued monitoring

If you have normal imaging results, this can be reassuring. However, continued monitoring of the lump by you and your doctor is essential. Your physician will recommend what your next steps should be.

Ready to care for you

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