

Benign Breast Disease

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The term benign breast disease refers to a group of conditions that affect the breast, but are not cancer. There are many different types of benign breast conditions. Some are found during routine breast screening and some are identified because they are causing symptoms such as discomfort or pain.

Although benign breast conditions are not cancer, some patients may require extra tests to make a diagnosis. After a diagnosis is made, the follow up plan will depend on what type of benign breast disease was found. Some possible benign breast disease conditions are:

- **Hyperplasia** – Cells that are growing too quickly within the ducts or lobules of the breast. Hyperplasia, particularly atypical hyperplasia, meaning it does not have the normal characteristics of hyperplasia can increase the risk for breast cancer. Your doctor may discuss options for reducing your breast cancer risk and/or more screening.
- **Cyst** – a fluid-filled sac that feels like a lump and may be tender. Cysts are relatively common in younger women who have not gone through menopause. They do not increase the risk of cancer, and do not need to be removed in most cases.
- **Fibroadenoma** – A smooth, rubbery or hard lump within the breast tissue. Fibroadenomas are most common in women between ages 15 to 35 and do not increase the risk of breast cancer. They do not need to be removed unless they are very large and/or causing significant symptoms.

<http://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/documents/Patient%20Education/Fibroadenoma-ks.pdf>

- **Papilloma** – Small growth within the ducts of the breast. Papillomas can cause nipple discharge but do not increase the risk of cancer unless further tests confirm there are abnormal or early cancer cells in the surrounding tissue. Papillomas are most common in women ages 35 to 55 and can be removed with surgery.
- **Sclerosing adenosis** – Small breast lumps caused by enlarged breast lobules that may be painful. In the absence of other risk factors, sclerosing adenosis does not generally need treatment
- **Radial scar** – A collection of connective tissue fibers that can be removed with surgery.
- **Lobular carcinoma in situ (LCIS)** – LCIS are abnormal cells that are found in a part of breast tissue called lobules. Women with LCIS have a higher chance to develop breast cancer in their lifetime compared to women in the general population. Your doctor may discuss options for reducing your breast cancer risk and/or more screening. If this is found on a biopsy, surgery may be needed to confirm the diagnosis and rule out the possibility of cancer.
- **Fibrocystic breast disease** – A very common benign condition that may result in lumpy-feeling breasts. Fibrocystic breast disease is not really a disease, and women with this condition do not have abnormal breasts. This condition is most common in women between 30 and 50 years of age. Having fibrocystic breasts does not increase the risk for breast cancer.