

# Breast Pain: Care Instructions



## Your Care Instructions

Breast tenderness and pain may come and go with your monthly periods (cyclic), or it may not follow any pattern (noncyclic). Breast pain is rarely caused by a serious health problem. You may need tests to find the cause.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

- If your doctor gave you medicine, take it exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- Take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve), to relieve pain and swelling. Read and follow all instructions on the label.
- Do not take two or more pain medicines at the same time unless the doctor told you to. Many pain medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.
- Wear a supportive bra, such as a sports bra or a jog bra.
- Cut down on the amount of fat in your diet. If you need help planning healthy meals, see a dietitian.
- Get at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. Walking is a good choice. You also may want to do other activities, such as running, swimming, cycling, or playing tennis or team sports.
- Keep a healthy sleep pattern. Go to bed at the same time every night, and get up at the same time every day.

## When should you call for help?

**Call your doctor now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new changes in a breast, such as:
  - A lump or thickening in your breast or armpit.
  - A change in the breast's size or shape.
  - Skin changes, such as dimples or puckers.
  - Nipple discharge.
  - A change in the color or feel of the skin of your breast or the darker area around the nipple (areola).
  - A change in the shape of the nipple (it may look like it's being pulled into the breast).
- You have symptoms of a breast infection, such as:
  - Increased pain, swelling, redness, or warmth around a breast.
  - Red streaks extending from the breast.
  - Pus draining from a breast.
  - A fever.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your breast pain does not get better after 1 week.
- You have a lump or thickening in your breast or armpit.

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