

Hope & Healing

Breast Pain Easing Breast Discomfort

A heart at peace gives life to the body — Proverbs 14:30

Introduction

Breast discomfort occurs in approximately 70% of American women during some point of their lives.

Breasts are usually tender during pregnancy or just before a menstrual period. Pain during these times follows the natural cycles of estrogen and progesterone production. These two hormones are signaling the milk-producing breast cells to grow.

Naturally, growing cells require more nourishment and nourishment is carried within blood. So, the breast glands become fluid-clogged with blood, stretching supporting fibers and causing pain.

Or, when small grape-like clusters of cysts or larger cysts are present, the fat cells and fibrous tissues surrounding them get stretched, causing pain.

Note: In either case the things you can do to bring relief and healing are the same. Try these and find what works for you.

Decrease Breast Stimulation

Eliminate excess estrogen. A study at Tufts University School of Medicine found that women who eat more whole grains, vegetables and beans, and less fat, will eliminate more estrogen through the increased fiber in their stools.

Thin down. Fat cells produce and store estrogens. Normal weight is best.

Cut Prolactin. Prolactin production can be leveled off through vitamins. Prolactin from the brain stimulates breast tissues. The B Vitamins, Vitamin C, magnesium, and calcium turn down the prolactin

effect.

Pass on hard fats. The body gets essential fatty acids, like gamma linoleic acid (GLA) by converting other fats. GLA also helps keep prolactin levels steady. Hydrogenated palm oils and other hard fats interfere with GLA production.

Seek peace of mind. Stress increases adrenalin. Adrenalin also interferes with GLA conversion.

Reduce Breast Congestion

Control caffeine. Several studies show that caffeine increases breast congestion. Others are inconclusive. Still, avoiding coffee, tea, cola drinks and caffeine containing pain medicines is worth a try. If it works, it may work very well.

Skip the salt. Hormones cause fluid buildup through salt retention seven to ten days before your periods. Maybe skipping the pizza, crackers, and salt shaker during this time will help.

Avoid fluid pills. Diuretics can flush fluid, bringing relief from congested breasts. If fluid loss is too great, however, your potassium may fall, causing weakness. And, your body's handling of glucose gets a little off, too.

Relief from drugs. Ibuprofen are bought over the counter for relief of breast congestion, but avoid these drugs if you have stomach trouble like an ulcer or if you're pregnant. Ask your doctor about their safe use.

Cold therapy. Try dipping your hands in

cold water and cupping your breasts.

Heat treatments. Cold works for some, heat for others. Try a heating pad, hot water bottle or a hot bath. And, note this, sometimes alternating heat and cold works best.

A support system. A sturdy bra, like those used by joggers, can help ease over-stretched breast fibers. And, this works at night, worn to bed.

Consider the pill. The estrogen in birth control pills can either help or hurt breast tenderness, depending on your particular condition. If you have many small cysts, a low estrogen pill may help. A solid growth (fibroadenoma), however, can be aggravated.

Managing excess fluid. Excess breast fluids can sometimes be eased into lymph channels and carried away through a gentle breast massage. Try this: lie on your back. Using a body lotion, rotate your fingers along the breast surface in half-dollar size circles. Then, cup your hands beneath the breasts, bringing them up and in.

Castor oil comfort. Truly inflamed breasts can be eased by castor oil compresses as recommended by Dr. Christiane Northrup of the University of Vermont College of Medicine.

What you'll need:

- Cold-pressed castor oil.
- A wool flannel cloth.
- A piece of plastic.
- A heating pad.

Here's what you do:

- Fold the cloth into four layers.
- Saturate the cloth with the oil, but not so wet that it drips. Place the cloth on the breast. Cover with the plastic.
- apply the heating pad at moderate, or go to hot, if you can tolerate it. Leave it on for an hour.

Castor oil contains a substance that increases healing by stimulating lymphocyte cells. For the best results use the compresses each day for 3 to 7 days.

Breast Self-Care and Lumps _____

About 90% of breast lumps are found by women during their own breast self-exam, not by doctors, nurses, or mammograms. Breast self-exam works and it costs nothing. It should become a part of your monthly routine. Mark on your calendar to examine your breasts one week after your period begins. Or, if you have no periods, examine your breasts at the same time each month. It's far better to overcome the fear of what you may find and go ahead and examine your breasts, rather than face the consequences of having a larger lump found later by someone else.

A Dominant Lump _____

What you are looking for during the breast exam is a dominant lump. Here's how a dominant lump feels. Thrust your tongue into the inside of your cheek. Feel the outside surface of your cheek for the knot produced by your tongue. That's what dominant lump feels like. If you find one, don't delay, have your doctor check it.

Breast Self-Exam _____

Step 1. During a bath, glide your fingers over your breasts, checking for a dominant lump.

Step 2. After the bath, before a mirror, in a well-lit room, with your arms by your sides, look for skin dimpling or a nipple pulled in.

Step 3. Before the mirror, lift your hands high over your head. Look for lumps, swelling, dimpled skin, or scaling or discharge from a nipple.

Step 4. With your hands on your hips, tighten your chest muscles by pressing firmly inward. Again, in the mirror, look for changes since your last exam. The two breasts are rarely the same and a regular self-exam will show you what is usual for you.

Step 5. Squeeze each nipple gently, looking for bloody or milky discharges. Either should be reported to your doctor, but milky discharges can be harmless.

Step 6. Lie on your back with a flat pillow beneath your right shoulder and with your right hand behind your head. Using the flat of your fingers, feel for lumps with your left hand.

Step 7. Begin at the outer edge, near to and including the armpit. Work inward. A ridge of firm tissue in the lower curve of each breast is normal. The armpit area is especially important as serious lumps are often found there.

Step 8. Transfer the pillow to the left shoulder and examine the left breast with your right hand.

Summary _____

Anticipate breast tenderness as a part of your menstrual cycle and find the measures that will give you relief. Look upon breast self-exam as one of the most important preventive practices you can do, and do it.

Awaken the Miracles Within You

The Miracle of The Thought in Prayer

In prayer it is the thought that counts, not the words used. The words indicate the thought.

However, you may feel that your idea can only be made clear through the use of a lot of words. Or a few words or phrases may be sufficient. One way is not better than another when both indicate a right turn of heart.

You may remember Ali Baba and the Cave, "Open Sesame," the exact word, opened the door. The thought in this case was worthless; the door remained shut. Prayer is the exact opposite. The thought opens the door.

As long as the thought is right we may use any language we find helpful.

You may find that words get in your way, delaying your visit with the Lord. When the Lord is ready, welcome Him immediately. Experience Him without trying to define Him. In fact, you may have to drop all words to feel His presence.

The recommendations and information in this handout are appropriate in most cases. However, for specific information concerning your personal medical condition, please, consult your doctor.