

**Mammography and
Examinations by a Physician**

Breast cancer affects almost as many women in their forties as it does women fifty and over. As a result, the American Cancer Society has revised its screening guidelines. The current recommendations are:

Yearly mammograms are recommended starting at age 40 and continuing for as long as a woman is in good health.

Women at high risk should get an MRI and a mammogram every year. Women at moderately increased risk or having a dense mammographic pattern should have breast ultrasound along with their yearly mammogram.

KCBC
Knoxville Comprehensive Breast Center



*Screening
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KCBC'S

**BREAST
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**BREAST
PAIN**

Knoxville Comprehensive Breast Center
KCBC
Screening Diagnosis Treatment

*The breast health specialists
for over thirty years*

The Knoxville Comprehensive Breast Center Breast Health Library has been designed to give you more information about breast health issues. If you have additional questions after you read this brochure, please be sure to ask a Breast Health Nurse Specialist.

BREAST PAIN

Breast pain is very common. Most women experience some degree of pain, tenderness, or aching. For some women the pain is mild and barely noticeable. However, other women may find the pain very uncomfortable, causing annoyance and anxiety. Breast pain may be experienced in both breasts, only one breast, or in a specific area of a breast.

There are several causes for breast pain. The most frequent cause is cyclical hormonal changes. Normal breasts responses to the surge of estrogen just before the menstrual period include: tenderness, shooting pain, aching, and increased generalized lumpiness. These responses occur about one week prior to menses and usually dissipate with the end of your menstrual cycle. Women may experience cyclical pain in both breasts, although some may find one breast is more painful than the other. Many times hormonal replacement therapy will simulate natural hormonal responses and

therefore cause breast pain.

Pain may be aggravated by certain substances in the diet. Caffeine along with the herbs Ginseng and Dong Quai have often been associated with breast pain. Some medications, particularly those used to treat hypertension and heart disease, may cause sensitivity and pain in the breast.

Woman who smoke tend to experience a higher incidence of breast pain. The nicotine in cigarettes narrows the blood vessels above the waist in women, contributing to breast pain. *Smoking increases the risk of breast cancer.*

Injury to the breast may cause short-term tenderness and pain. Commonly, women will experience some bruising at the affected area. As discoloration decreases, the pain usually subsides. There is no increased risk of breast cancer from trauma.

It is important to provide proper fit and style of brassieres. Experiment with different styles and non-underwire bras to find the one that works best.

Many of our patients have found some relief from their breast pain by using one or a combination of the following suggestions:

- 1) *Vitamin E 200-400 I U/daily*
- 2) *Reduction of caffeine intake*
- 3) *Anti-inflammatories (Advil, Aleve, Aspirin)*
- 4) *Eliminate smoking*

- 5) *Evening Primrose Oil, 3 capsules/daily*
- 6) *Very warm compresses*
- 7) *Decreasing intake of Ginseng and/or Dong Quai*

These measures may take up to a month to be effective.

Estimates indicate ninety percent of women experience some degree of breast pain at some point in their life. Breast pain is not a specific marker for cancer and most commonly is caused by some of the reasons mentioned earlier. This pain may be uncomfortable and disconcerting, but is manageable. Hopefully, this information sheet will be helpful and provide some assistance in your management of breast pain.

CHEST WALL PAIN

Pain in the chest wall, also known as *musculoskeletal* pain, can imitate breast pain. This is very common. Any new physical activity can bring on muscle soreness, another cause of musculoskeletal pain. Women are also prone to developing *costochondritis*, inflammation of the rib cartilage around the breast bone. It is very common and often confused for breast pain. Anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen, Motrin, or Advil can be helpful if the pain is severe.