



Beaumont Hospital

Patient Information
on

Fibroadenoma

What is a fibroadenoma?

A fibroadenoma is a benign (non-cancerous) mobile lump that arises from an overgrowth of fibrous (containing fibres) and glandular (related to gland) tissues from the breast. They most commonly occur in women between the ages of fifteen and thirty years of age, although they can occur at any age.

A fibroadenoma usually has a rubbery texture, is smooth to the touch and moves easily under the skin. For this reason it is sometimes called a breast mouse.

Fibroadenomas are usually painless, but in some people they may be tender or even painful. Fibroadenomas do not increase a woman's chance of getting cancer.

It is possible to have more than one fibroadenoma in the same breast and also to find them in the other breast. They can vary in size from 1 – 5cm, but occasionally some can grow to more than 5cm and are called “giant” fibroadenomas. Most fibroadenomas stay the same size, some get smaller and some eventually disappear over time. A small number of fibroadenomas get bigger.

What causes a fibroadenoma?

The cause of breast fibroadenomas is unknown. However, it is thought that they occur because of increased sensitivity to the female hormone oestrogen. They occur in pre-menstrual women, post-menopausal women who are taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and can grow larger in women who are pregnant.

How are they diagnosed?

Fibroadenomas usually become noticeable as a lump in the breast. Sometimes your GP will be able to say whether the lump feels like a fibroadenoma. However s/he is likely to refer you to a breast clinic for further evaluation where you'll be seen by specialist doctors or nurses.

At the breast clinic you'll probably have three different tests, known as triple assessment

- a breast examination performed by a breast surgeon
- a mammogram and/or breast ultrasound scan
- a core biopsy (the removal of a sample of breast tissue, which is then sent to the laboratory for analysis).

Follow up or treatment

In most cases you won't need any follow up or treatment if you have a fibroadenoma. You should go back to your GP if it gets bigger or becomes painful.

Sometimes surgery is used to remove a fibroadenoma, usually because it is large or because the woman requests it. Removal of a fibroadenoma involves a small operation, requiring admission to hospital for a day. You'll have a small wound on your breast, and your doctors will tell you how to care for it afterwards. The operation will leave a small scar but this will fade in time. In most patients removing a fibroadenoma does not usually affect the shape of the breast.

What does this mean for you?

Even though you may feel relieved knowing that a fibroadenoma is a benign condition, you may still worry about breast cancer. Having a fibroadenoma does not increase your risk of developing breast cancer. However, it is still important that you are breast aware, and that you go back to your doctor if you notice any further lumps or changes in your breast.

Breast Awareness

Women of all ages should be breast aware.

Remember the **5** point breast awareness code

1. Know what is normal for you
2. Know what changes to look for
3. Look and feel
4. Discuss changes with your GP without delay
5. Attend for routine breast screening from aged 50 to 69

If you are aged between 50 and 69 you are eligible for Breast Check, the National Breast Screening Programme. If this is the case you should be on their register and an invitation will be sent in the post every 2 years with an appointment. If you wish to register you can call BreastCheck on 1800 45 45 55 or check on-line at www.breastcheck.ie.

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