

YOUR FOOD



MY BREAST HURTS; WHAT COULD BE CAUSING THIS PAIN?

Dear Dr. Grace,
I have been experiencing breast pain for the past three weeks. The pain started during the breast cancer month, so I am worried. What can I do to relieve the pain?

Dear Jackie,
Breast pain is common in women of all ages. This worries many, thinking they have breast cancer. Breast pain alone is not usually a sign of breast cancer and is much more likely to be either a benign (not cancerous) breast condition or chest wall pain due to other factors. This pain commonly affects the upper, outer area of both breasts, though pain can spread to the arms. Breast pain exists mostly in women who are below menopause age. It is not common to find a woman who has reached menopause crying about breast pain, unless she is on hormone replacement therapy.

Depending on the signs and symptoms presented by a patient, breast pain can be classified as cyclical or non-cyclical.

For cyclical breast pain, it exists whenever a woman is about to menstruate or



Tight fitting bras put pressure on the breast, causing pain

pregnant. Breasts may become tender, heavy. With a dull ache. Some women describe it as soreness with heaviness, while others say it is like a stabling or burning pain.

The breasts may swell and in most cases all the breasts are affected, it may become lumpy. The pain may become more intense a few days before menstruation or start about a week before menstruation.

For non-cyclical, breast pain affects just one breast, usually just within a quadrant of the breast, but may spread across the chest. This is common among post-menopausal women. When the pain comes, it takes days to stop.

For some women, the pain may be caused by mastitis from an infection with in the breast causing fever, swelling, tenderness and warmth at the



Consumption of fruits can help reduce breast pain

painful area. Mastitis affects mainly lactating mothers.

Breast pain in women between the age of 25 and 50 is commonly caused by hormonal imbalance in the body specifically, estrogen.

Estrogen causes breast tissue to grow and sometimes inflammation.

In addition to that, pregnancy, use of contraceptive pill, overconsumption of alcohol, smoking, overconsumption of caffeine also cause breast pain.

Wearing tight bras, like the way it is these days with young women, can also cause breast pain. This condition can be prevented through proper diet and lifestyle.

● Eat good quality fats
Poor quality oils and those that are rancid, increase your

inflammation. Stick to olive oil and coconut oil for cooking, and use these and flaxseed oil for dressing salads, grains and vegetables.

● Less sugar

Sugar creates inflammation. I know it is tough, but you can do it and you will feel better.

● Add diet rich in magnesium

● Reduce on the consumption of caffeine and alcohol

● Stop smoking

● Increase amount of fresh fruits and vegetables you eat.

● Massage your breast daily with clove oil. Have warm or cold press on the breast every morning and evening.

● Exercise regularly to maintain a healthy weight.

● Wear well-fitting bras during the day; physical activities and a soft support bra during sleep.

Clinically breasts can be examined by determining the presence of any lumps, changes in nipple appearance or nipple discharges. You can also visit a doctor if the pain persists.

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