

If You Find A **BREAST LUMP OR CHANGE**



Family History Tool

To help record and organize your family health history, the Susan G. Komen® My Family Health History tool can be used as a resource to help gather information that will be useful as you talk with your doctor.

I've found a lump or change in my breast. Now what?

Try not to worry. Most lumps are not cancer. In younger women, lumps are often related to monthly periods. These lumps often go away by the end of the cycle. A lump and other changes in the breast could be signs of breast cancer. See a doctor if you notice any of these changes:

Lump, hard knot or thickening inside the breast or underarm area



Swelling, warmth, redness or darkening of the breast



Change in the size or shape of the breast



Dimpling or puckering of the skin



Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple



Pulling in of your nipple or other parts of the breast



Nipple discharge that starts suddenly



New pain in one spot that does not go away



What will the doctor do?

The doctor will ask you about your personal and family medical history. They will also ask you about what you found. Show the doctor exactly where the lump or other change is in your breast. A doctor can tell a lot about a lump from its size, texture and movement within the breast. Benign (not cancer) lumps often feel different from breast cancer.

This fact sheet is intended to be a brief overview. For more information, visit komen.org or call Susan G. Komen's Breast Care Helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET, or email at helpline@komen.org. Se habla español.

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Resources

Susan G. Komen®
1-877 GO KOMEN
(1-877-465-6636)
komen.org

Related online resources:

- [Benign Breast Conditions](#)
- [Breast Biopsy](#)
- [Breast Cancer Screening and Follow-up Tests](#)
- [If you find a lump](#)

How is a benign breast lump treated?

A breast lump may be a benign breast condition that may or may not need to be treated. You may need follow-up tests to learn more about the lump or change. For example, cysts (liquid-filled sacs) often don't need treatment. Other benign breast lumps may need to be surgically removed but require no further treatment.

What kind of follow-up tests will I need?

- **Mammogram** uses X-rays to create an image of the breast. When used as a follow-up test, it is called a diagnostic mammogram. The basic procedure is the same as a screening mammogram, but usually more views are taken with a diagnostic mammogram.
- **Breast ultrasound** uses sound waves to make images of the breast. It can show the difference between a liquid-filled cyst and a solid mass.
- **Breast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** uses magnetic fields to create an image of the breast. It can sometimes find breast cancer not seen on a mammogram.

What can follow-up tests show?

The results of follow-up tests may show:

- No signs of breast cancer. You return to your normal screening plan.
- A benign breast condition (some types may need treatment).
- The abnormal finding is probably not cancer. You need to return for follow-up in 4 to 6 months.

Will I need a biopsy?

If the lump is solid and the follow-up tests cannot rule out breast cancer, a biopsy may be done. It removes some cells or a small amount of tissue. The tissue is examined under a microscope to see if it contains cancer. Usually, a needle biopsy is done first. There's a small chance a needle biopsy can miss the suspicious area. This is less likely when the lump can be felt and when the biopsy is guided with a breast ultrasound, breast MRI or stereotactic mammography.

If your doctor finds nothing abnormal, but you still feel something is wrong, it's a good idea to get a second opinion. Although a lump or change may be nothing to worry about, it's best to be sure.

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