

General Information and Guidance for Women with Painful / Tender Breasts

Breast Pain

Breast pain is a very common symptom for women. Generally, women with breast pain and **no** lump, do not need to worry.

What commonly causes breast pain?

Breast pain is particularly common when hormone levels are changing, e.g.

- Puberty
- Pre-menstrually
- Starting hormonal contraceptive
- Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)
- Around the menopause
- Early pregnancy
- Breastfeeding

Other common causes include

- Excess caffeine-type chemicals
- Injury to the breast
- An infection in the breast

What kind of breast pain can I treat myself?

Pain that affects both breasts (often unevenly), varies with the time of the month, usually gets better with time and simple self-help.

What can I do myself? Some suggestion that you may find helpful

<p>1. Take evening primrose oil or starflower oil</p> <p>The important ingredient in both is Gamolenic acid (GLA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take 240g daily (maximum 320mg) of Gamolenic acid (GLA) for at least 6 months • Starflower oil contains almost twice the (GLA) of that in evening primrose oil • It is best to avoid GLA if you have a history of epilepsy or you may be pregnant • Once pain is controlled, continue on regular and continuous GLA. (80mg should be sufficient)
<p>Important: if taking Warfarin or blood thinning products, you must consult your doctor if you notice and increase in nose bleeds or unexplained bruising</p>	
<p>2. Reduce caffeine drinks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee, tea and certain fizzy drinks e.g. Irn Bru, Cola • Decaffeinated products contain a similar chemical and should also be reduced
<p>3. Wear a well-supporting bra</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also in bed at night if required
<p>4. Take vitamin E supplement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has helped some women
<p>5. NSAID (Ibuprofen/Voltarol) Gel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying to the painful area of the breast can be helpful and provides quicker relief than taking Starflower Oil

When is breast pain worrying?

Pain with a lump or redness should always be checked out by your GP. Cysts or abscesses most commonly cause this, and can be treated.

Please discuss any changes or persistent symptoms with your doctor or nurse.