

Breast Pain

Breast pain is very common in women and is usually not a sign of breast cancer (<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/breast-cancer>). There are two different types of breast pain. Pain that is not suspicious is called “clinically insignificant pain.” Pain that might be a sign of breast cancer is called “clinically significant” pain.

Clinically insignificant breast pain is the most common type and is not a sign of breast cancer. This type of pain occurs in more than one part of the breast or in both breasts. The pain may come and go and may be worse before a woman has her menstrual period. Imaging tests are not recommended for this type of pain.

Clinically significant pain occurs in one part of the breast and does not come and go. Most clinically significant pain is not caused by cancer, but imaging tests are recommended.

For women under the age of 30 with clinically significant breast pain, breast ultrasound is usually appropriate as the initial imaging test. For women 30 years and older with clinically significant breast pain, diagnostic mammogram (<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/mammo>), digital breast tomosynthesis (<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/tomosynthesis>) (also known as 3-D mammogram), and breast ultrasound are usually appropriate as initial imaging tests.

If women have pain and other symptoms, such as a lump or nipple discharge, they should talk to their doctor because other imaging tests may be recommended.

— By Rebecca S. Kowcek and Nina S. Vincoff, MD. This information originally appeared in the *Journal of the American College of Radiology*.

Disclaimer

This information is copied from the RadiologyInfo Web site (<http://www.radiologyinfo.org>) which is dedicated to providing the highest quality information. To ensure that, each section is reviewed by a physician with expertise in the area presented. All information contained in the Web site is further reviewed by an ACR (American College of Radiology) - RSNA (Radiological Society of North America) committee, comprising physicians with expertise in several radiologic areas.

However, it is not possible to assure that this Web site contains complete, up-to-date information on any particular subject. Therefore, ACR and RSNA make no representations or warranties about the suitability of this information for use for any particular purpose. All information is provided "as is" without express or implied warranty.

Please visit the RadiologyInfo Web site at <http://www.radiologyinfo.org> to view or download the latest information.

Note: Images may be shown for illustrative purposes. Do not attempt to draw conclusions or make diagnoses by comparing these images to other medical images, particularly your own. Only qualified physicians should interpret images; the radiologist is the physician expert trained in medical imaging.

Copyright

This material is copyrighted by either the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA), 820 Jorie Boulevard, Oak Brook, IL 60523-2251 or the American College of Radiology (ACR), 1891 Preston White Drive, Reston, VA 20191-4397. Commercial reproduction or multiple distribution by any traditional or electronically based reproduction/publication method is prohibited.

Copyright © 2024 Radiological Society of North America, Inc.