

## Fibrocystic Breast Condition

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### What is Fibrocystic Breast Condition?

Fibrocystic breast condition is a common problem in women prior to menopause. Typically characterized by pain, tenderness, lumpiness or swelling, symptoms are most prominent just before you menstruate. Although you may experience discomfort throughout one or both breasts, the pain is most typically felt in the upper, outer region of the breast.

Fibrocystic condition is caused by normal hormonal changes that occur during your menstrual cycle and therefore it should not be considered a “disease.”

### Fibrocystic Condition vs. Breast Cancer

Your physician must diagnose fibrocystic condition so that you are reassured that you do not have breast cancer. Although a fibrocystic condition does not increase your risk for developing breast cancer, you must still have regular checkups by your physician, do monthly breast self-exam and have regular mammograms.

### Recommended Treatment

In many cases, practicing the following treatments can alleviate symptoms:

#### Treatment One: Caffeine-Free Diet

The elimination of caffeine from the diet often results in a dramatic reduction of pain and tenderness.

Note: Immediately after the withdrawal of caffeine you may experience a headache lasting one to several days.

#### Treatment Two: High-Fiber, Low-Fat Diet

In addition to a caffeine-free diet, we also encourage you to follow a high-fiber, low-fat diet. New scientific findings indicate that such a diet not only alleviates symptoms of fibrocystic condition, but it can also decrease your risk for developing breast cancer. Reduction of salt may also reduce swelling and tenderness. For more detailed information regarding diet and nutrition, contact the Breast Care Center or your local unit of the American Cancer Society.

It may take several months before you notice any improvement from dietary changes; however, if symptoms do not subside, we recommend that you also follow Treatments Three and Four.



## Treatment Three: Vitamin E

Vitamin E may also alleviate your symptoms. We recommend a daily dose of 400 units. If there is no improvement after one month, you may double the dose. If there is still no positive response, discontinue its use and proceed with Treatment Four.

## Treatment Four: Evening Primrose Oil

Evening Primrose Oil, available over-the-counter at most health food stores, has proven to be effective with some women. We suggest the following plan: two capsules (500mg) each night for two weeks; if no improvement, increase to four capsules for two more weeks; if still no improvement, take six capsules for two months. If no significant improvement is noted at the end of three months discontinue its use.

## Other Helpful Hints

Many women have found that fibrocystic pain can also be alleviated simply by the use of an analgesic such as ADVIL. One to two tablets twice a day may prove very helpful. Also, if you exercise regularly, be sure to wear a good support bra.

***By following these guidelines you should be able to control your symptoms. However, if they persist, we recommend that you consult your physician.***

### Common Sources of Caffeine

Product	Caffeine (mg)
<b>Coffee:</b> (6 oz.)	
Brewed	103
Instant, regular	75
Decaffeinated	2
<b>Tea:</b> (6 oz.)	
Brewed (3 min.)	36
<b>Chocolate:</b>	
Chocolate chips (6 oz.)	105
Baking chocolate	14
Chocolate milk	11
<b>Sodas:</b>	
Coca-Cola	46
Dr. Pepper	41
Mountain Dew	54
RC Cola	18
Pepsi	38
7 up	0
Caffeine-free sodas	0



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This handout provides a general overview on this topic and may not apply to everyone. To find out if this handout applies to you and to get more information on this subject, talk to your family doctor.

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