

# Fibroadenoma

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## What is a fibroadenoma?

A fibroadenoma is a firm, round lump that may feel like a small marble that moves easily in the breast. Fibroadenomas are benign (not cancer) and are usually not painful, however, some women do have some pain in the breast prior to their menstrual cycle. Most women will have a single fibroadenoma, but some women will have multiple fibroadenomas in one or both breasts.



The cause of fibroadenomas is not known, but it may be related to reproductive hormones. Fibroadenomas are most common in women under age 30, but can happen at any age up until menopause or even after menopause in women taking hormone replacement therapy.

Fibroadenomas may increase and decrease in size during pregnancy or throughout the menstrual cycle. Some fibroadenomas can develop into or are a tumour known as a phyllodes tumour and these types of tumours need to be removed. This is rare and happens in less than 1% of cases.

## How is a fibroadenoma diagnosed?

Most often, a fibroadenoma is found by self-checks. A mammogram and/or a breast ultrasound may be ordered. Fibroadenomas appear round and smooth, with very clear edges on a mammogram and/or ultrasound.

In some cases, a biopsy done under the guidance of an ultrasound is needed to confirm the diagnosis of a fibroadenoma.

## What is the treatment for a fibroadenoma?

A decision about treatment will be made after a careful discussion with your doctor. Your own concerns and expectations are important, and are part of the decision.

In most cases, fibroadenomas can safely be monitored over time with clinical breast examination by a health care provider and follow-up ultrasounds. Some fibroadenomas may go away on their own or stay the same size, and this is reassuring.

Some women undergo a surgery to remove the fibroadenoma. Surgery may be considered if:

- the diagnosis is not certain after a biopsy
- the fibroadenoma is large or growing
- the fibroadenoma is causing significant symptoms

## Does a fibroadenoma increase my breast cancer risk?

No, the majority of fibroadenomas do not increase your risk to develop breast cancer in your lifetime.

Though it is not common, some women are diagnosed with a more complex fibroadenoma that may be linked with a small increased risk to develop breast cancer. The diagnosis of a complex fibroadenoma is found based on the results of your imaging tests and breast biopsy.

## How can I find out more about fibroadenomas?

The Canadian Cancer Society ([www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)) and the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation ([www.cbcf.org](http://www.cbcf.org)) have information on their websites about non-cancerous tumours of the breast, including fibroadenomas.

