

# Key Terms Related to Your Breast Health

Your medical team may use words you are not familiar with. If you aren't sure what a word means, be sure to ask!

Patient education is part of the services Doctors and Nurses provide. It is critical for you to ask them about everything related to your health. Remember, you are an essential partner in your health care!

## Key Terms Related to Your Breast Health

- ▶ You will often hear the term **mammary** used in reference to breasts.
- ▶ The female breast is mostly made up of a collection of fat cells called **adipose tissue**.
- ▶ An average female breast is made up of 12–20 sections called **lobes**, which are made up of many smaller **lobules**, the **glands** that produces milk in nursing women.
- ▶ Both the lobes and lobules are connected by milk **ducts**, which act as stems or tubes to carry the milk to the **nipple**.
- ▶ **Areola** surround the nipple.

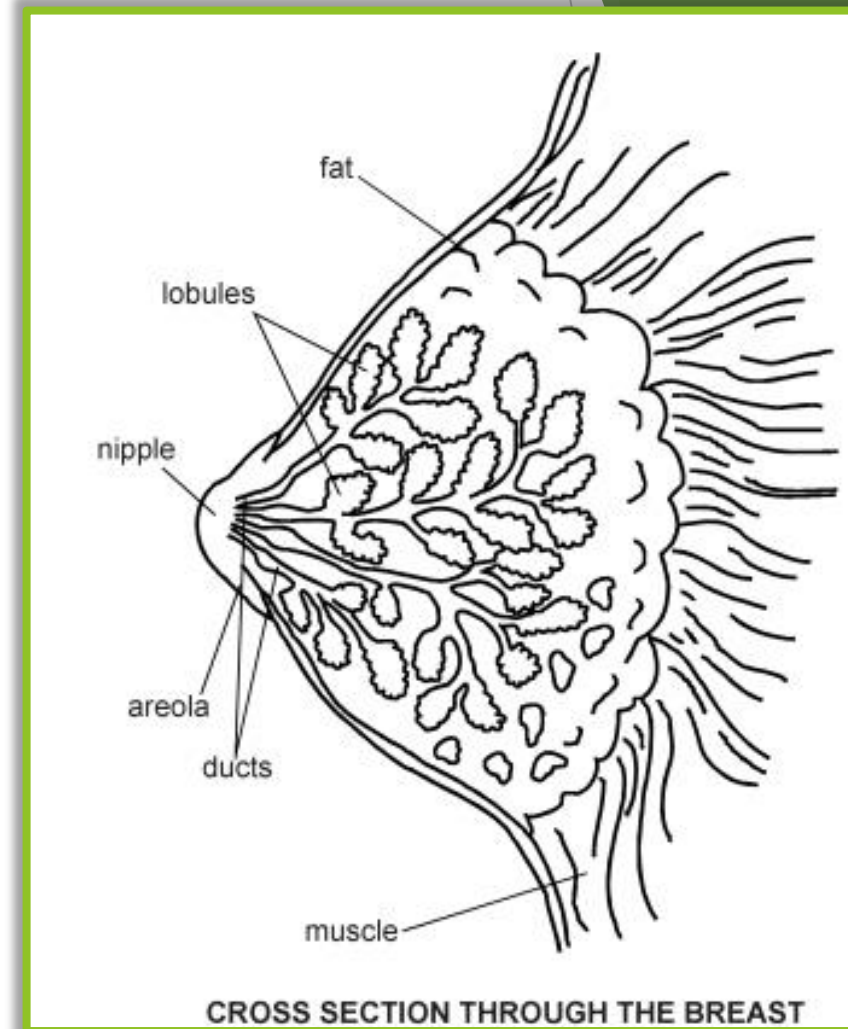


Image source: <http://Patient.info/diagram/breast-diagram>

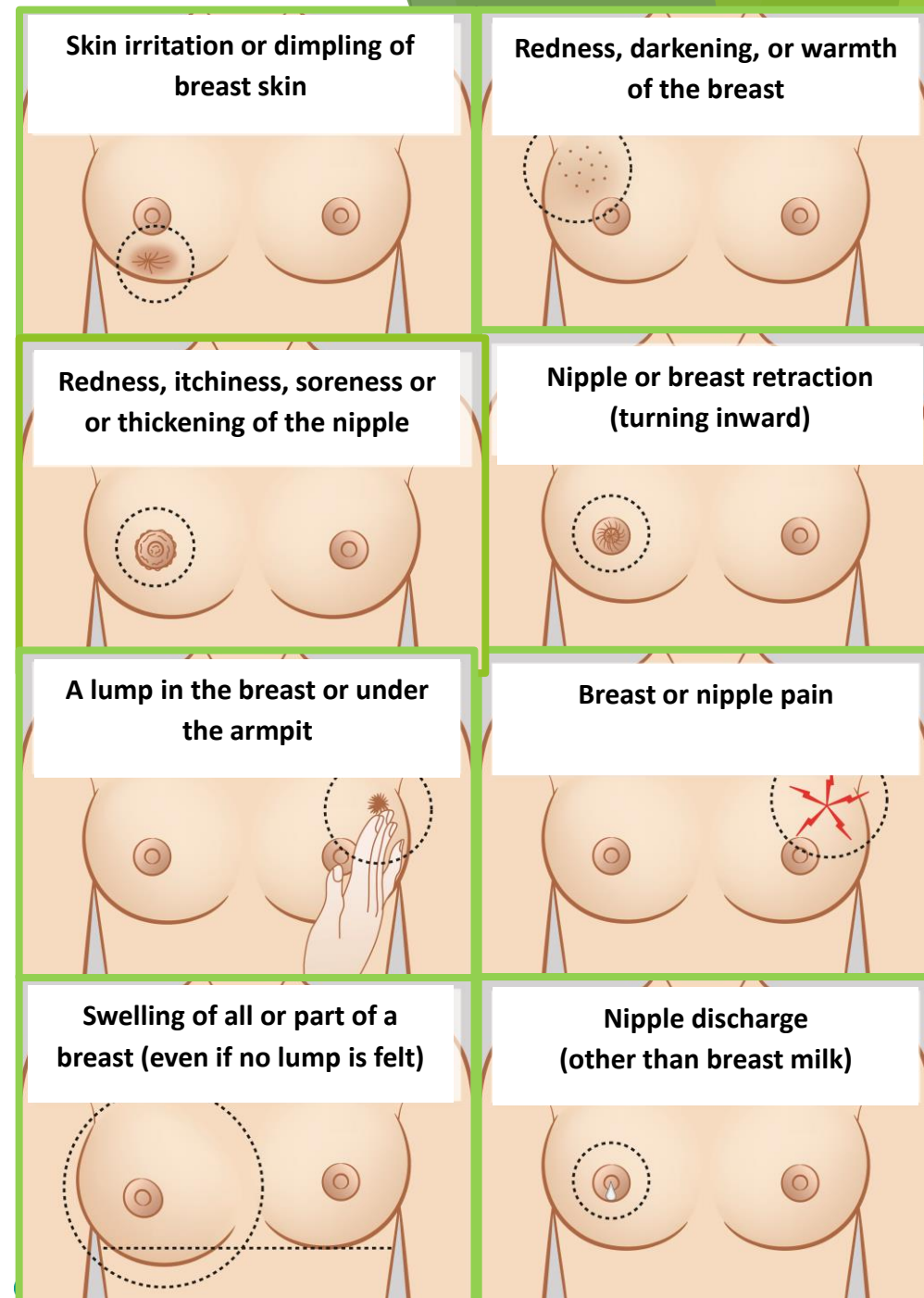
# Signs of Breast Cancer

The signs of breast cancer are not the same for all women, so it is very important to know how your breasts normally look and feel.

If you notice any change, see your Doctor!

Can you recognize the signs and symptoms of breast cancer?

- Skin irritation or dimpling of breast skin
- Redness, darkening, or warmth of the breast
- Redness, itchiness, soreness or thickening of the nipple
- Nipple or breast retraction (turning inward)
- A lump in the breast or under the armpit
- Breast or nipple pain
- Swelling of all or part of a breast (even if no lump is felt)
- Nipple discharge (other than breast milk)



# Do These Things for Breast Health

These simple steps can help lower your risk of breast cancer:

- ❑ **Maintain a Healthy Weight:** Being overweight can increase the risk of many different cancers, including breast cancer.
- ❑ **Be Physically Active:** Women who are physically active for at least 30 minutes a day have a lower risk of breast cancer.
- ❑ **Avoid Too Much Alcohol:** Only drink alcohol if you drink moderately, which means no more than one drink a day for women.
- ❑ **Breastfeed, If Possible:** Breastfeeding lowers the risk of breast cancer. It also has great health benefits for your child!
- ❑ **Avoid Post-Menopausal Hormones:** If women do take post-menopausal hormones, it should be for the shortest time possible. Talk about the risks and benefits of post-menopausal hormones with your Doctor.
- ❑ **Talk About Your Family History:** You may be at high risk of breast cancer if you have a mother or sister who developed breast or ovarian cancer (especially at an early age) or if you have multiple family members (including males) who developed breast, ovarian or prostate cancer.
- ❑ **Most importantly, Keep Getting Screened!** Regularly scheduled breast cancer screening remains the single best way to protect yourself from the disease. Screening can help find cancer early, when it's most treatable!

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# References for Information in this Guide

- ▶ American College of Radiology
- ▶ American Cancer Society
- ▶ American Diabetes Association
- ▶ American Society of Clinical Oncology
- ▶ Cancer Centers of America
- ▶ Centers for Disease Control
- ▶ World Health Organization
- ▶ American Heart Association
- ▶ National Institute of Health
- ▶ National Cervical Cancer Coalition
- ▶ American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- ▶ Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
- ▶ Foundation for Women's Cancer
- ▶ College of American Pathologists

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“I’m very happy this program is available.

All of the health and lifestyle education provided is greatly appreciated. I think it is a great way to keep our community healthy.”

Do you have questions  
about what you learned today?



Do you need help  
finding additional health services?

We would love to talk to you. Just ask!

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