BAPTIST MD Anderson Cancer Center
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Breast Exam Findings

The breast is made up mostly of fat and breast tissue. Breast tissue consists of lobules and ducts. **Lobules** make breast milk and **ducts** carry the milk from the lobules to the nipple. Various types of conditions can develop within the breasts. Most of these changes or lumps are not cancer.

Fibroadenomas are solid, round lumps in the breast that are easily moveable under the skin. They are usually painless. Their cause is not known but they are more common in young women. They are not cancer and typically do not need to be treated or removed. Your doctor may recommend surgical removal if the fibroadenoma is large and interferes with breast imaging tests, like a mammogram.

A **cyst** is a fluid-filled sac. It is not known what causes a breast cyst to form. Breast cysts are common and do not increase your risk of breast cancer. Cysts may or may not disappear by themselves. If a cyst becomes large or painful, your doctor may draw out the fluid with a needle, called aspiration. Cysts that have been aspirated often grow back.

Fibrocystic breast changes are very common. It is a condition that makes your breasts feel lumpy and tender, due to an increase in fibrous tissue and small cysts. Symptoms tend to be most bothersome just before menstruation. Fibrocystic breast changes do not need to be treated. They do not increase your risk of breast cancer.

Gynecomastia is a benign (not cancer) male condition in which a male has one or two prominent breast(s). This does not increase a man's risk of developing breast cancer. Symptoms tend to appear as a small button-shaped lump felt under the nipple causing tenderness. Common causes include:

- Medication side effects
- Marijuana use
- Hormone changes
- No known cause

Calcifications are calcium deposits found within breast tissue. They are common and are usually associated with benign (not cancer) conditions. Calcifications may be a very early sign of breast cancer. For this reason, the radiologist carefully analyzes all calcifications seen in a mammogram.

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