

# Breast pain

Do your breasts hurt and feel lumpier the week before your period? You're not alone. These issues are normal and very common—in fact, benign breast issues affect from 50 - 70% of all women.

Breasts are affected by changing hormone levels during the menstrual cycle. They usually feel most tender during the week before menstruation. But sometimes, the breasts are painful through most of the cycle. Typically, these problems don't increase your risk of cancer. However, if you have localized breast pain that doesn't go away, visit your doctor for a complete exam.

## What does typical breast pain feel like?

- Mild, annoying discomfort
- Tingling, stinging or sharp pain throughout the breast
- Breasts feeling full or heavy

## What causes this?

- Changes in hormones throughout your menstrual cycle
- Discomfort when you sleep on your stomach or wear a bra
- Tenderness, swelling and lumpiness varying with the menstrual cycle

In many women, lumpiness and pain increase as they get older. This may be the result of an increased sensitivity to normal hormones.

## How can I get some relief?

- Wear a well-fitted support bra 24 hours a day when the breasts are most sensitive.
- Change to a larger bra if breast swelling occurs.
- Use heat from a heating pad, warm compress or bath.
- Use an ice pack or cold compress.
- Lose weight or maintain an ideal weight.
- Lower your salt intake.
- Try eliminating caffeine for three to four months—some women report this helps reduce symptoms.
- Take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) or acetaminophen to reduce discomfort.





[BSWHealth.com/BreastImaging](https://www.BSWHealth.com/BreastImaging)

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