NHS
Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

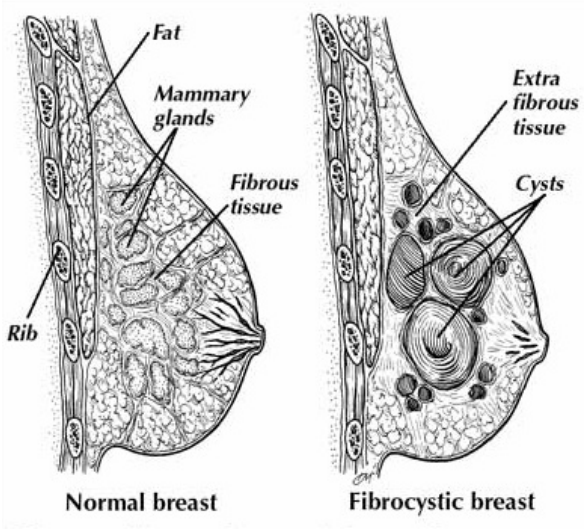
Fibrocystic breast change

This leaflet outlines possible breast symptoms caused by hormone changes.

Your breast

Your breast is made up of glands, fat and fibrous tissue. Each breast has 15-20 sections called lobes. Each lobe has many smaller lobules. The lobules end in dozens of tiny glands that can produce milk. The lobes, lobules and glands are linked by thin tubes called ducts.

Your breasts respond to changes in levels of the hormones progesterone and oestrogen. These hormone levels change during your monthly cycle, pregnancy, breastfeeding and menopause.



Fibrocystic breast changes

Fibrocystic breast changes are benign (not cancer). Fibrocystic breast changes can cause lumps, thickened tissue and swelling, and are most common during childbearing years. The Fibrocystic breast changes are not a disease and do not increase your risk of breast cancer. Fibrocystic changes may also occur after menopause in women taking HRT.

Breast awareness

If you have fibrocystic changes, it can be difficult to detect any new changes. Therefore, it is important that you should be aware of how your breasts normally feel to you, so that you are able to detect any new changes. Please see your GP for any changes that persist following a normal cycle.

More information

The NHS Breast Screening Programme has produced a five-point plan for being breast aware: **1)** know what's normal for you; **2)** look at your breasts and feel them; **3)** know what changes to look for; **4)** report any changes to your GP without delay; and **5)** attend routine screening if you're 50 or over.

If you have any concerns or worries, please contact Carolyn Denham, Breast Screen Nurse on 0118 322 8563. Out of normal working hours (add hours) please contact your GP.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RAD_0128 C Denham, Breast Screen Nurse, March 2025. Next review due: March 2027.