

13 WAYS TO SUPPORT BREAST HEALTH, NATURALLY



1. LEARNING ABOUT YO'SELF: BREAST TISSUE CHANGES WITH OUR CYCLES.

It is important to understand your own cycle because breast tissue is glandular tissue influenced by hormonal changes. It is normal to experience some breast tenderness at ovulation and 1 week before your period. The breast is made up of connective tissue, fat tissue, and milk glands. The Breast tissue goes into the arm pit area and is called the Tail of Spence.



2. MONTHLY BREAST EXAMS: UNDERSTANDING YOUR BREAST ANATOMY AND PRACTICING SELF-BREAST MASSAGE ONCE A MONTH WILL EMPOWER YOU.

The BEST time to do an exam is RIGHT AFTER your period because the tissue calms down after the hormonal shift of the cycle. The goal of the self-breast exam is to learn what is normal for you.

- a. In the shower, while washing the chest area to get familiar with the shape, texture, and contour of your breast. Start in the nipple area and areola using light pressure in small circle motion. Work your way outward around the breast and into the armpit. If you feel any small, hard, pea-shaped lump; then, make an appointment with your Gynecologist to check it out.
- b. Lying down on your back: place one hand behind your head so it can flatten your breast tissue against the chest wall. This makes it easier to feel the tissue. With the opposite hand, using the flat part of your fingers use medium pressure starting at the center of the nipple and working your way around into the armpit. Repeat on the other side.

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Tip: it is important to use your fingers NOT your fingertips because these are sensitive and may mistaken the normal lumps and fibers of the breast as the hard pea shape



3. WHAT ARE FIBROCYSTIC BREASTS?

It is when the connective tissue in the breast become thicker, or dense. It is normal for breast tissue to change over time and with hormonal changes. In Chinese Medicine, breast swelling and tenderness paired with irritability is because the Liver is congested. The Liver helps filter all the blood, taking out waste and toxins to be pooped out, helps break down old hormones and red blood cells, while producing energy need. If the Liver is clogged up with stress, high level of hormones, or one is not pooping enough; then, the Liver can get backed up, extra hormones go back into the body affecting the breast tissue, and the lymphatic system gets slower and sluggish. The lymphatic system includes our lymph nodes in the armpit area near our breast. All this plays a role in hormonal health and circulation as it influences the breast tissue. So, in Chinese Medicine, treating the Liver and circulation can help reduce congestion and fibrocystic breast tissue.

4. RECONSIDER YOUR BRA

Have you heard the recent complaints of underwire bras? If you wear bras, you know they can be uncomfortable. Most women are not wearing the right size bra. Better yet, some bras do not customize to our individual breast shape. **Did you know underwire bras decrease circulation of the blood and lymph system and weaken our chest muscles.** Weakened muscles cannot help hold up the girls properly and creates weakness in the back.

5. BREAST TENDERNESS & WHAT IT MEANS

Breast tissue are sensitive to hormonal changes. It is common to feel changes and increase sensitivity in nipples and tenderness during ovulation (Day 11-14) and 1 week before your period. During this time, **estrogen enlarges the milk ducts, while progesterone helps stimulate the milk glands.** This is the body's way of getting ready for a possible pregnancy. You know how your breast feel swollen before your period? **Well, the breast tissue can hold up to 1-2 pounds of fluid each!** This build up of fluids happens in the lower abdomen near your uterus too. When your period begins, this fluid gets to be released out as menstrual blood, while the fluid in the breast gets to be reabsorbed into the body! If you are getting pain and swelling not during this time; then, one will have to look into how to heal breast pain and decrease stress levels.

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What to do:

Go bra-less

Wear a cami/tank under shirt

Under-wire free bras

6. DECREASE DAIRY 1-2 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR PERIOD

If you are getting breast pain all month; then, stop dairy for 1 month. If you are getting painful breast between ovulation and your period; then, stop dairy 1-2 weeks before your period. Why? Because the increase hormones, high stress conditions the cows live in, and antibiotics injected will increase added hormones into your system producing more breast tenderness and possible pain. I know, I love my cheese and gelato, too! Give your body what it needs, play with it, and see if any benefit comes from adjusting some nutrition.

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What to do:

Try Dairy Free options

Switch to Organic Dairy products

7. DECREASE CAFFEINE INTAKE

Caffeine has been known to increase breast pain and tenderness by dilating the blood vessels creating more pressure and swelling. **If you have breast pain, try decreasing caffeine such as coffee (decaf too), chocolate, soda (regular and diet), and green tea.**



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What to do:

Decrease plastic usage: switch to metal, or glass, drinking containers.

Always drink from filter water resources & use BPA free plastic

Avoid leaving plastic water bottles in the car during the summer!

8. PLASTIC LEECHING ESTROGEN-LIKE HORMONES?

Plastic leeching estrogen-like hormones?! Phytoestrogens are by-products leached out from plastic and copy our hormones in our body. The problem is the phytoestrogens from plastics can throw off your hormones and create breast tissue imbalances. Have you ever tasted “plastic” from plastic water bottles? Well, those are the phytoestrogens in the water you are drinking.

9. CASTOR OIL HELPS DECREASE INFLAMMATION

When: 2-3 times per week for 1 hour for 2 months

Once pain decreases, do 1 time per week for maintenance and self-care

How? Soak cotton cloth with castor oil and place onto breast.



10. WHOLE FOOD NUTRITION FOR BREAST HEALTH

Breast tissue are sensitive to a diet high in saturated fats and high carb diet. These type of food raise our estrogen levels higher than they need to be. The higher the estrogen levels, the more the estrogen produces growth of the milk ducts-creating some pain and tenderness. The phytoestrogens from plastics and from certain types of foods contribute to increase risk of breast cancer because estrogen creates growth. The best type of nutrition is plant-based and maybe known as Paleo, Mediterranean, or Southern diet of southern greens and root vegetables!

What to Avoid and Decrease?

Refined sugar (Avoid), Alcohol (Reduce), Trans Fats (I See You, Potato chips), & Red Meat (Reduce)

11. TO EAT SOY, OR NOT?

Soy has been given a bad rap: Does it increase breast cancer risk or not? Well, the reason why it was thought soy may contribute to breast cancer growth was because it has isoflavones that resembles estrogen. The truth is the isoflavones found in soy DO NOT act like estrogen. Studies have concluded this plant based food helps with increasing mortality, decrease 'bad' cholesterol, and decrease inflammation. It has been concluded isoflavones DO NOT contribute to breast cancer growth*

What to Eat:

Organic, Non-GMO Soy is BEST: 1-2 servings per week

Tempeh, Tofu, Edamame, Soy milk, Soy Nuts

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What to Eat?

Plant Based

Nutrition: Eat the Color of the Rainbow to increase vitamin & mineral, & antioxidant health!

Increase cruciferous foods: cabbage, broccoli, kale, brussel sprouts, turnips

Why? They have indole-3-carbinol to decrease estrogen's ability to bind to breast tissue.

Eat Healthy Fats & Omega 3's: Olive oil, avocado oil, coconut oil, wild-caught fish, nuts, seeds

Why? To decrease inflammation.

Taking Omega 3's helps prevent breast cancer by 20-35%.*

Lean-grassfed meats

12. EMOTIONS & BREAST HEALTH: BREASTS SYMBOLIZE NURTURING & GIVING

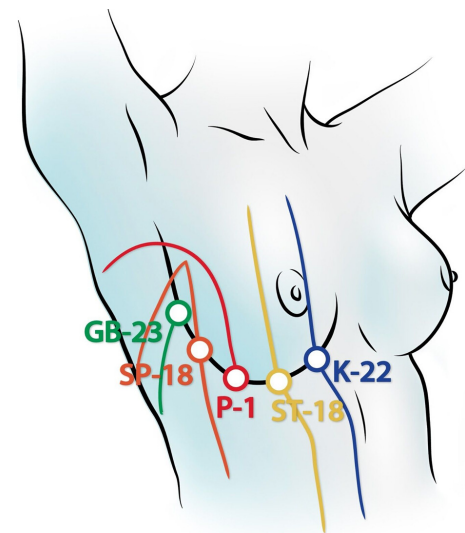
For the most part, breasts have been related to nurturing through sexual health, or nurturing through breastfeeding. As women, we tend to give away our nurturing at the expense to our own well-being. Practicing filling our bucket and giving our overflow is the best way to decrease burning ourselves out. We normally hold the emotions of hurt, sorrow, unfinished emotional business, guilt, and grief within our breast tissue. Those who tend to have panic attacks, high anxiety, and higher stress levels have increase breast lumps and tenderness due to higher stress hormones*.

What to do?

E-motions are energy in motion. They flow and move out of our body. **To balance breast health and emotional health, give to yourself, nurture yourself and your needs, express the unexpressed emotions, feel the emotions, and creating healthy boundaries with others in relationship to your breasts.**

13. ACUPUNCTURE & HERBAL MEDICINE FOR BREAST HEALTH!

Acupuncture has been found to balance hormones, decrease stress, decrease inflammation, alleviate pain, and balance emotional wellness. There are highways on the body known as channels, which connect to the nervous, blood, and lymph systems. The Acupuncture points are on these channels on the skin. With Acupuncture, there is local effect and full body effect. Locally stimulating and boosting the immune system and balancing/releasing specific hormones. There are several channels running through the breast such as Kidney, Stomach, Pericardium, and Conception vessel. The Liver and Lung channels have influence on the breast tissue and glands. Acupuncture can help decrease breast tenderness and pain, help decrease fibrocystic breast tissue, help provide support for the side effects of chemotherapy and radiating when treating breast cancer such as neuropathy, anxiety, fear, and nausea, and support lactation for nursing.



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