

WHAT IS A FIBROADENOMA?

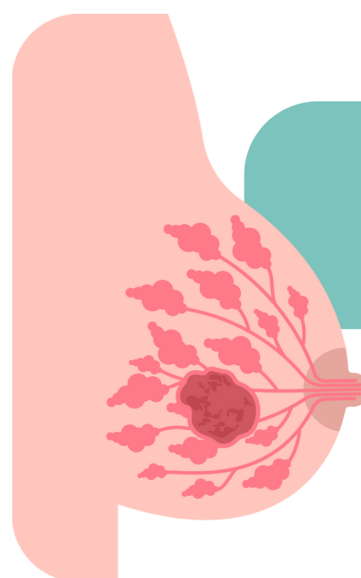
A fibroadenoma is a non cancerous (benign) lump which is very common in young women between 15 and 25 years of age. It is caused by an increased growth of some of the milk producing glandular tissue of the breast. This part of the breast tissue grows fastest in teenagers and in women in their early twenties which is why the fibroadenoma lumps are most common during this time.

WHY DO I GET A FIBROADENOMA?

There is no specific reason why some women develop fibroadenomas and others do not. About **2 in 100 women** will have a fibroadenoma. About 20% of women with fibroadenomas will have more than one.

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

A fibroadenoma is usually a **small (less than 3cm)**, smooth, round lump in the breast. Typically, it moves around when you feel it. The lump is sometimes described as a breast mouse or **marble in the breast**.



FIBROADENOMA IS A **SMOOTH LUMP** THAT MOVES AROUND, OCCURRING IN **TEENAGERS AND YOUNG WOMEN**.

WHAT TESTS SHOULD BE DONE TO CONFIRM A FIBROADENOMA?

Fibroadenomas in teenagers that are small (less than 3cm) and fit the typical description above do not need any tests. A doctor or nurse with experience in treating breast conditions can make the diagnosis by examination alone.

For women in their twenties, an ultrasound is needed, and often the doctor or nurse will use a needle to remove some cells to test in the laboratory (a needle biopsy) to confirm that the lump is a fibroadenoma.

Women in their thirties should always have ultrasound and/or mammogram and a needle biopsy.

SHOULD I REMOVE MY FIBROADENOMA?

Should I have an operation to remove it?

A fibroadenoma should be removed if:

- It is very large, more than 5cm in size
- It has unusual features such as being fixed or having an irregular shape
- The ultrasound or needle biopsy shows features that might suggest the lump could be cancerous
- You are over thirty and have a fibroadenoma
- You request removal because you are anxious about it or find it painful, even though the pain does not always get better after surgery

Can a fibroadenoma become cancer if it's not removed?

No, fibroadenomas do not become cancer. If the diagnosis is made properly, there is no danger in having regular checkups and not removing the lump. Also, having a fibroadenoma does not put you at higher risk of breast cancer later in life. However, any new breast lump that develops should be checked for cancer as it may not be another fibroadenoma.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF IT IS NOT REMOVED?

Most fibroadenomas will slowly become smaller and disappear over several years. A few will increase in size and need to be removed if over 5cm in size. Often, your doctor will follow up the lump for a few years. If you have been discharged from the clinic with the diagnosis of a fibroadenoma, please come for a check-up if:

- The lump **increases in size**
- You develop a **new lump**
- You notice **any changes in the skin** of the breast or glands under the arm.



If you notice a worrying change in your breasts, you can make a Breast Clinic appointment by calling **021 404 5566**. If the wait for an appointment is over one month, you can ask your doctor or clinic nurse to write an urgent referral letter and we will see you at the **next Friday Breast Clinic at Groote Schuur Hospital**