

Benign Conditions of the Breast



Fibroadenoma & Breast Cysts

Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation

in partnership with

Dr Reddys Foundation for Health Education

&

Breast Cancer Care, United Kingdom



We are delighted to be able to introduce you to this Publication and pleased to support the work of **Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation**, which is being undertaken in association with **Dr Reddy's Foundation for Health Education and Breast Cancer Care**.

With approximately **44,000** new cases being diagnosed each year in the **United Kingdom**, breast cancer remains at the top of the list of diseases, which affect women of all ages. We are also aware that the incidence of breast cancer in India has been steadily rising over recent years.

As the largest provider of information and emotional support to people affected by breast cancer in the UK, and with over 30 years' experience, we know how important it is that people have accurate, up-to-date and accessible information from the point of diagnosis, through treatment and beyond.

Therefore, we are pleased to collaborate with Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation and Dr Reddy's Foundation for Health Education to provide such information to women in India, who are also coping with this difficult disease.

Christine Fogg And Samia Al Qadhi
Joint Chief Executives
Breast Cancer Care
United Kingdom



It is indeed a privilege to be associated with this Venture. As a pharmaceutical company, Dr.Reddy's Laboratories has always endeavoured to provide patients globally with affordable medicines. As a core purpose, we would like to help patients lead healthier lives.

Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation was established to make a significant and meaningful difference to the lives of people affected by breast cancer or with breast health concerns. We are delighted to be partnering with the Breast Cancer Foundation through Dr. Reddy's Foundation for Health Education - a major step towards a noble purpose.

At a personal level, I am grateful to **Dr. Raghu Ram** for inviting me to be part of this initiative. Having known him as a close friend for more than two decades, it was with utmost shock that I had received the news of his mother being diagnosed with breast cancer a few years ago. From that point onwards, his dedication to setting up this venture to make a difference in the lives of women in India is laudable. With his return to India having gained expertise in leading institutions in the UK, I am sure his efforts will bear fruit and unleash a new standard of care for women in the fight against breast cancer.

Satish Reddy
Managing Director & Chief Operating Officer
Dr.Reddy's Laboratories, India



It gives me the greatest pleasure in writing this Introductory note to a series of comprehensive Information booklets that deal with various aspects of Breast Cancer ranging from diagnosis through treatment and recovery in simple, easy to read format. Equally, there is also abundant information on various non cancerous conditions that affect the breast, which will also be made available through this Publication series.

Breast Cancer was an unwelcome visitor in my life when I was diagnosed with this illness. It is indeed an irony that I was diagnosed with breast cancer during my holiday to the United Kingdom in 2002 when I went to visit my son, Raghu, who was training to become a Breast Cancer Surgeon . Having got over the initial shock after diagnosis, the Breast Care Nurse who looked after me in the UK gave me a series of Booklets published by **Breast Cancer Care** that helped me enormously throughout my journey from the stage of diagnosis to recovery. I have no doubt that this Publication Series will go a long way in addressing the fears and anxieties of women & men affected by breast cancer in India.

When Raghu decided to return back to India to dedicate the rest of his professional career to practice the art and science of Breast Surgery in India, I emphasised to him the importance of empowering women affected with breast cancer in India so that they could be better informed, better prepared & more importantly feel more in control at every stage of their treatment.

In order to fill this huge void in the delivery of breast cancer care in India, **Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation** set out to establish a collaboration with **Breast Cancer Care** who over the past 30 years, excelled in educating women & men affected by this illness

Finally, I would like to express my most sincere appreciation to **Satish Reddy**, Managing Director & Chief Operating Officer of Dr Reddy's Laboratories for his unwavering commitment to this cause. My heartfelt thanks to **Christine Fogg & Samia Al Qadhi** and the energetic, dedicated & ever so helpful team at **Breast Cancer Care** for collaborating with the Foundation in bringing out this most useful Information series in India.

I would like to end with a quotation that I read from a book recently -

“As survivors, we learn that survivorship is an attitude we adopt.
It is the component of recovery that no one else can do for us.
We have to decide for ourselves how we intend to respond to our illness and
how we approach our recovery.
We alone decide to become survivors”

Dr. Ushalakshmi
Founder Chairman
Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation



Whilst collecting my thoughts, I reminded myself that

'You don't write because you want to write something.
You write because you've got something to write'

Dr. Ushalakshmi is a daughter, a sister, a doctor, a wife, my mother, a grandmother, a colleague & a friend when she was diagnosed with early breast cancer in 2002. Being the only child for my parents, I was profoundly affected through my own personal experience of dealing with this illness diagnosed to someone so close to me. I was astonished to find that there is very limited information available to empower women affected with breast cancer in India.

To honour my mother's struggle & applaud her strength in the fight against Breast Cancer, the Breast Cancer Foundation has her name attached to it

One of the most important components of delivering high quality Breast Cancer Care is the ability to counsel, guide & educate women in simple, easy to understand language not only about the disease but also about the various treatment options including the risks and side effects.

Over the past three decades, **Breast Cancer Care** has established a track record of being the largest provider of high quality and easy to understand breast cancer information & support across the **United Kingdom**. The information booklet series has everything you need to know about breast cancer. I am very grateful and deeply indebted to Breast Cancer Care for very kindly agreeing to collaborate & share their excellent well researched information booklets with **Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation**.

In closing, this Venture would not have been made possible without the unrestricted grant from **Dr Reddy's Foundation for Health Education**. Words fail me in expressing my most sincere gratitude to none other than my childhood friend, **Mr Satish Reddy, Managing Director & Chief Operating Officer of Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd** who has always encouraged me and has indeed played a pivotal role in transforming my dream of establishing Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation into a reality.

Dr. P. Raghu Ram
Chief Executive Officer
Ushalakshmi Breast Cancer Foundation

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About this leaflet

This leaflet tells you about Fibroadenomas & Breast Cysts, both of which are benign (non cancerous) lumps in the Breast. It explains about how they are diagnosed and what will happen if it needs to be followed up or treated.

We hope this information helps you understand more about fibroadenomas and what this means for you.

FIBROADENOMA

What is a fibroadenoma?

The breasts are made up of ducts (tubes that carry milk to the nipple) and lobules (milk-producing glands), which are surrounded by fatty tissue and supportive tissue. Sometimes tissue will grow over a lobule like a ball, forming a solid lump. This is a fibroadenoma.

Fibroadenomas are benign (non-cancerous) and do not increase the risk of developing breast cancer. It is thought that they occur because of increased sensitivity to the female hormone oestrogen. A fibroadenoma usually has a rubbery texture, is smooth to the touch and moves easily under the skin. For this reason it is sometimes called a breast mouse.

Fibroadenomas are usually painless, but in some people may feel tender or even painful. Fibroadenomas are very common and it is not unusual to have more than one. They often develop during puberty and so are mostly found in young women, although they can occur in women of any age.

Most fibroadenomas are about 1 to 3cm in size and are called common fibroadenomas. Some can grow to more than 5cms and are called giant fibroadenomas. Fibroadenomas found in teenage girls are called juvenile fibroadenomas.

Most fibroadenomas stay the same size. Some get smaller and some eventually disappear over time. A small number of fibroadenomas get bigger, particularly those in teenage girls. Fibroadenomas can also get bigger during pregnancy and breastfeeding. This is quite normal and nothing to worry about.

How is Fibroadenoma diagnosed?

Fibroadenomas usually become noticeable as a lump in the breast. When you have a breast examination your Specialist will usually be able to say whether the lump feels like a fibroadenoma.

You should ideally have a **TRIPLE ASSESSMENT**, so that a definite diagnosis can be made. This includes

1. A clinical breast examination
2. A mammogram (breast x-ray) and ultrasound scan (which creates a picture of the breast using high-frequency sound waves)
3. Biopsy - Fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC)/ Core Biopsy.

A FNAC is where a fine needle and syringe is used to take a sample of cells from the lump. In some clinics you may have a core biopsy rather than a FNAC. A core biopsy uses a larger needle to take a sample of tissue from the lump rather than just cells.

If you are **under 35** you're more likely to have an **ultrasound scan** rather than a mammogram. This is because younger women's breast tissue is too dense to give a good image on a mammogram.

Follow up or treatment

In most cases you won't need any treatment if you have a fibroadenoma. You may be asked to return to your Specialist for a further Ultrasound scan in a few months to assess if the lump has got any bigger. If it has not changed in size at further assessment, you would not need regular follow up for this condition. You may return to the doctor if you feel that the lump in the breast has got bigger or painful.

Sometimes surgery is used to remove a fibroadenoma because it is larger than 3cm or because the woman requests it. To remove a fibroadenoma you'll have a small operation using a General anaesthetic and this procedure can be done a **Day case (ie. You should be able to go home the same day of the operation)**. You'll have a small temporary wound with a stitch or stitches in it, and your Specialist will tell you how to care for it afterwards. The operation will leave a small scar but this will fade in time.

Removing a fibroadenoma doesn't usually affect the shape of the breast, as normal breast tissue will fill the space where it used to be.

What this means for you

You may feel anxious about what having a fibroadenoma means for you. Even though you may feel relieved that it is a benign condition, you may still worry about breast cancer.

Having a fibroadenoma does not increase your risk of developing breast cancer. However, it is still important to be breast aware and go back to your Specialist if you notice any further lumps or other changes in your breasts. You can find out more about being breast aware in our **Breast awareness** booklet.

BREAST CYSTS

What are breast cysts?

The breasts are made up of lobules (milk-producing glands) and ducts (tubes that carry milk to the nipple), which are surrounded by fatty tissue and supportive tissue. Sometimes fluid-filled sacs develop in the breast tissue. These are **Breast cysts**.

It's thought that they develop naturally as the breast ages and changes. Although you can develop breast cysts at any age, they are most common in women over 35 who haven't yet reached the menopause. They occur more frequently as women approach the menopause and usually stop or are not as frequent after it.

However, women who are taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) after the menopause may also develop cysts.

Cysts can feel soft if they're near the surface of the skin, or like a hard lump if they're deeper in the breast tissue. They can develop anywhere in the breast, but are more commonly found in the upper half. For some women cysts can feel uncomfortable and even painful, and before a period cysts may become larger, and feel sore and tender.

It's quite common to develop one or more cysts either in one breast or both breasts and this is nothing to worry about. There are also many women who have cysts without knowing about them.

How are they found?

Cysts usually become noticeable as a lump in the breast, or are sometimes found by chance when you have a breast examination or routine breast screening. When you have a breast examination your Doctor will sometimes be able to say whether the lump feels like a cyst. But to make sure, you must be referred to a Breast Specialist/Surgical Oncologist for **TRIPLE ASSESSMENT** of this lump (Please refer to page for details about Triple Assessment)

When you see the Specialist, you are likely to have a Clinical Breast examination and a mammogram (breast x-ray) or ultrasound scan (which creates a picture of the breast using high-frequency sound waves).

If you are **under 35** you're more likely to have an ultrasound scan than a mammogram. This is because younger women's breast tissue is too dense to give a clear image on a mammogram. You may also have an ultrasound scan if the lump is difficult to find. If the lump can be felt easily your specialist may put a fine needle into the lump and draw off (aspirate) the fluid.

Treatment and follow up

If you do have a breast cyst or cysts you won't usually need any further treatment or follow up. Many cysts go away by themselves and are nothing to worry about. If the cyst is large and causing discomfort, or doesn't go away on its own, your Specialist will draw off the fluid using a fine needle and syringe. Once the fluid has been drawn off the cyst usually disappears.

You may feel some discomfort as the fluid is being drawn off, and the area may feel bruised and tender for some days afterwards, so you may wish to take painkillers such as paracetamol. The fluid drawn off from the cyst can vary in appearance, from clear to very dark. It's usually only sent to a laboratory for testing if it's bloodstained, as there's a very small risk that this may be a sign of breast cancer.

Cysts can come back, or you may develop new cysts. If you think a cyst has come back or a new cyst has formed do go back to your Doctor to have it checked. The treatment for cysts is the same each time. If you've had a cyst drained your specialist may ask you to come back in several weeks to see if it's refilled.

If a cyst keeps on refilling, you may be offered the choice of having a small operation to remove it completely. This operation is called a surgical biopsy. It can be done using either a local or a general anaesthetic and you'll be in hospital for the day or overnight. You'll have a small wound with a stitch or stitches in it, and your doctors will tell you how to care for it afterwards. If your breast is painful after the operation you may want to take painkillers such as paracetamol. The operation will leave a small scar but this will fade in time.

What this means for you

You may feel anxious about having a breast cyst or cysts. Even though you may feel relieved that it's a benign condition, you may still worry about breast cancer. Having a breast cyst does not increase your risk of developing breast cancer. However, it's still important to be breast aware and go back to your Doctor if you think your cyst has come back or if you notice any other changes in your breasts.

You can find out more about being breast aware in our **Breast awareness** booklet.