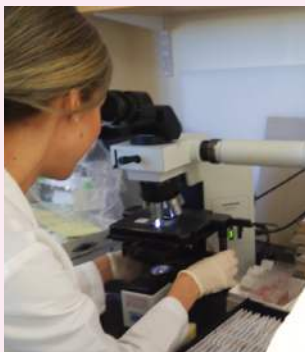


## IF YOU FIND A **BREAST LUMP OR CHANGE**

### **Family History Tool**

To help record and organize your family health history, the Susan G. Komen® [My Family Health History tool](#) can be used as a resource to help gather information that will be useful as you talk with your doctor.



### **I've found a lump or change in my breast. Now what?**

Try not to panic. Most lumps are not cancer. In younger women, lumps are often related to their monthly period. Although they often go away by the end of the cycle, don't ignore any change in your breast. It's best to see a doctor to have it checked.

### **What will the doctor do?**

The doctor will ask you about your personal and family medical history. He or she will also ask you about what you found. Show the doctor exactly where the lump or other change is in your breast. A doctor can tell a lot about a lump from its size, texture and movement within the breast. Benign (not cancer) lumps often feel different from breast cancer.

### **How is a benign breast lump treated?**

A breast lump may be a benign breast condition that may or may not need to be treated. For example, cysts (liquid-filled sacs) often don't need treatment. If a cyst is painful or can be felt, it can be drained (aspirated). Other benign breast lumps may need to be surgically removed (but require no other treatment). You may need follow-up tests to learn more about the lump or change.

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For more information, visit [komen.org](http://komen.org) or call Susan G. Komen's breast care helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 10 PM ET.

## Resources

### **Susan G. Komen®**

1-877 GO KOMEN  
(1-877-465-6636)  
komen.org

### **American Cancer Society**

1-800-ACS-2345  
cancer.org

### **National Cancer Institute**

1-800-4-CANCER  
cancer.gov

## Related fact sheets in this series:

- Benign Breast Conditions
- Biopsy
- Breast Cancer Screening and Follow-up Tests

## What kind of follow-up tests will I need?

Your doctor will decide which follow-up tests are needed. You may have a:

- **Mammogram** which uses X-rays to create an image of the breast. When used as a follow-up test, it may be called a diagnostic mammogram. The basic procedure is the same as a screening mammogram, but usually more views are taken with a diagnostic mammogram.
- **Breast ultrasound** which uses sound waves to make images of the breast. It can show the difference between a liquid-filled cyst and a solid mass.
- **Breast magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)** which uses magnetic fields to create an image of the breast. It can sometimes find breast cancer not seen on a mammogram.

## What can follow-up tests show?

The results of follow-up tests may show:

- No signs of breast cancer. You return to your normal screening plan.
- A benign breast condition (some types may need treatment).
- The abnormal finding is probably not cancer. You need to return for screening in 4-6 months.
- A biopsy is needed to tell whether or not the breast change is cancer.

## Will I need a biopsy?

If the lump is solid and the follow-up tests cannot rule out breast cancer, then a biopsy may be needed to remove some cells or a small amount of tissue. The tissue is examined under a microscope to see if it contains cancer. Usually, a needle biopsy is done first. It can show whether or not cancer cells are present. Although there's a small chance the biopsy needle can miss the suspicious area, this is less likely when the lump can be felt and when the biopsy is guided with a breast ultrasound, breast MRI or stereotactic mammography.

If your doctor finds nothing abnormal, but you still feel something is wrong, it's a good idea to get a second opinion. Although a lump or change may be nothing to worry about, it's best to be sure.

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The list of resources is only a suggested resource and is not a complete listing of breast health and breast cancer materials or information. The information contained herein is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or to replace the services of a medical professional. Komen does not endorse, recommend or make any warranties or representations regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, quality or non-infringement of any of the materials, products or information provided by the organizations referenced herein.