



## The Association of Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgeons

*...dedicated to safe, state-of-the-art surgery and health life-styles for women of all ages*

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### Minimizing Breast Pain: Recommendations

Sore breasts can signal the onset of PMS -- that 'ouch' feeling tells some women they're premenstrual more reliably than a calendar.

Cyclical breast soreness shouldn't cause concern, according to Women's Health America. However, breast pain doesn't have to be tolerated. Here's how to minimize discomfort, and how to recognize cautionary signs that should send you to your doctor.

Watch what you eat and drink. Caffeine and sugar can cause premenstrual breast tenderness. If you can't give up coffee, cut down all month, not just during the premenstrual time.

Salt is often mistaken as the culprit in bloating and breast tenderness, but sugar is actually implicated in puffy, sore breasts. Minimizing sweets helps manage breast soreness, and may improve other PMS symptoms.

#### **Wear good support (not under wire):**

**Keep moving.** Breast pain can make exercising uncomfortable. But regular exercise actually helps reduce premenstrual breast soreness, according to a Canadian study.

**Supplement.** The supplement Vitamin B6, taken as part of a B-complex vitamin that contains magnesium, can reduce premenstrual breast soreness. Evening primrose oil may also help premenstrual breast tenderness. Some women find relief by using Vitamin E 400-1000iu/day.

**Review your medication.** During perimenopause, PMS-like symptoms such as breast tenderness often worsen. A woman taking hormones who continues to experience breast soreness should evaluate her regimen. The dosage and delivery system may need altering. Occasionally breast tenderness is caused by excessive dosing of estrogen and progesterone.

Natural progesterone can also help alleviate breast soreness. Synthetic progestins in birth control pills or in HRT may cause breast pain. Natural progesterone, identical to the hormone the body produces, is often easier to tolerate.

#### **Cause for Concern**

Intense or prolonged breast soreness or pain occurring at unexpected times of the month should be evaluated. Irregular menstruation during peri-menopause can make it difficult to tell if breast pain is cyclical or something out of the ordinary.

Any nipple discharge that accompanies the pain is a red flag and should be evaluated. Self-breast examination is very important regardless of how good you think you are at performing the examination.

Very Truly Yours,