

Patient information

Periductal Mastitis

Breast Services

What is periductal mastitis?

This is a single area of the breast which is tender or aches. It may be red in this area and the nipple may change shape (pull in).

It is caused by some inflammation in the milk ducts. Often, women with this problem may have nipple discharge.

It is also more common in women who smoke cigarettes.

How does the doctor know that I have periductal mastitis?

Often, women with this problem have breast pain which may come and go or may be constant for a short while. Some women describe the pain like a burning or stabbing feeling in the breast which may spread to the nipple.

The clinic doctor or nurse can tell you if you have periductal mastitis after listening to how you talk about your symptoms; and after examining you.

What treatments could I have?

- If you smoke – stop smoking.

It is well known that the effects of smoking affect the milk ducts in the breast and can make them become inflamed (painful) or infected. If you need help or advice to stop smoking, please ask.

- You could try simple painkillers, such as the type you would take to ease a headache. If you are not sure about painkillers – please discuss this with the doctor.

Complications of periductal mastitis

If the milk ducts affected by periductal mastitis become badly inflamed or infected, the following may develop:

- **Peri areolar inflammation** (inflammation near the coloured area of the nipple). This is pain and swelling around the areola (coloured area around the nipple). This may need to be treated with antibiotics such as Augmentin (or a combination of Cephadrine or Erythromycin and Metronidazole, for those allergic to penicillin).

If treatment with antibiotics does not help, an abscess may form.

- **Abscess.** This may be treated with antibiotics. However, antibiotics alone may not work. For this reason, a needle will need to be inserted in the affected area of the breast to drain the infection. Sometimes, a cut needs to be made in the affected area to allow it to drain. This will let the infected matter (pus) come out of the breast. Sometimes the abscess will come back because the drainage does not remove the diseased milk duct and a mammary duct fistula may develop.

If you smoke – try to stop smoking. This will make it more likely to heal and get better and less likely to happen again in the future.

If the infection comes back a few times, your surgeon may want to remove the diseased milk ducts. For this, you will need to come into hospital for an operation as a day case and your doctor will discuss this with you. (Please see our Hadfield's procedure leaflet PIF 1236).

- **Mammary duct fistula** (a small opening of the skin near the nipple). With this problem there is a small opening on the skin which runs into the breast tissue under the areola (coloured area around the nipple). The opening (fistula) may be releasing pus (or similar) and the nipple may retract (go inwards).

The best way to treat this is by an operation to open up the area and allow it to heal normally or remove the opening (fistula) surgically.

Your doctor will discuss this with you. You will need to have an operation under general anaesthetic and a hospital stay for one or two days (please see removal of milk ducts leaflet).

Remember, if you stop smoking – this will give you the best chance of healing and the best chance of not having more of these problems in the future.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

Breast Care Nurses

Tel: 0151 706 2927

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2927

Breast Nurse Practitioners

Tel: 0151 706 2931

Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2931

Your family doctor (GP) or Practice Nurse

Breast Cancer Care

Tel: 0808 800 6000

Website www.breastcancercare.org.uk

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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