

WBCHP Breast Care Algorithm Notes

- a) If mass appears to be a simple cyst, one may perform an aspiration initially to obviate lengthy workup and expedite treatment. However, imaging is more accurate in undisturbed breast tissue. Delay the mammogram for about two weeks for needle tracks to resolve.
- b) Abnormal may include mass, discharge, pain, and skin or nipple changes. (See “h” below.)
- c) Diagnostic mammogram within two months does not need to be repeated. One may use a two month old mammogram for a current evaluation.
- d) Ultrasound may be the initial imaging method for women under 30 years old.
- e) Here, breast specialist means an experienced clinician able to dependably obtain a valid tissue diagnosis. This includes radiologists, surgeons, and adequately trained primary care providers.
- f) Non-painful simple cysts confirmed by ultrasound and mammography need not be aspirated. (See “h” - breast pain below.)
- g) Concordant means lesion found by imaging satisfactorily explains clinical symptoms or signs and pathology.
- h) Workup of varied breast symptoms:
 - h1. Breast Pain:
 - All women with symptomatic breast pain should be initially evaluated using the breast algorithm. Ultrasound may identify a simple cyst.
 - Women with cyclic pain should be evaluated for hormone irregularities or medications influencing hormonal balance. **WBCHP does not cover laboratory testing or treatment in this case.**
 - Women with non-cyclic pain may be referred to a breast specialist if no hormonal cause can be found.
 - h2. Discharge:
 - All women with symptomatic discharge should be initially evaluated using the breast algorithm.
 - If bloody or heme-occult positive, refer to breast specialist.
 - Persistent spontaneous unilateral nipple discharge can be worked up by the addition of a ductogram in addition to the usual imaging workup.
 - If non-bloody discharge is spontaneous and persists over two months, refer to breast specialist.
 - If bilateral discharge consider hormonal, medication, non-prescription supplement, or physiologic causes.
 - h3. Skin Changes involving nipple or other sites on the breast:
 - All women with symptomatic skin changes should be initially evaluated using the breast algorithm.
 - Unilateral skin changes may be treated with either a short course of antibiotics or topical steroid creams. **WBCHP does not cover this type of therapy.** If signs or symptoms do not resolve, refer to a breast specialist.

Thank you to Cary Kaufman, MD for developing and preparing this algorithm.