

Fibrocystic Breast Disorder: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Characteristically cyclic and bilateral, with multiple cysts of varying sizes giving the breast a nodular consistency

Pain or pre-menstrual breast pain and tenderness common, although condition often without symptoms

Occurs in twenty to forty percent of premenopausal women

QUICK REVIEW

- Fibrocystic breast disease is most often a component of premenstrual syndrome.
- Elevated estrogen-to-progesterone ratio and/or increased prolactin levels are common.
- Eliminating caffeine and similar compounds has produced improvements in as high as ninety-seven percent of women in clinical trials.
- Hypothyroidism and/or iodine deficiency may be a causative factor in fibrocystic breast disease.
- Women *who* have fewer than three bowel movements per week have a 4.5 times greater rate of fibrocystic breast disease than women *who* have at least one bowel movement a day.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

Unless a woman has pure FBD (no other PMS symptom), the therapeutic approach outlined in PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME will more definitively meet her individual needs, as FBD is often a component of the more encompassing PMS. The therapy recommended here includes key factors discussed in that chapter.

Diet

The diet should be primarily vegetarian, with large amounts of dietary fiber. All methylxanthines should be eliminated until symptoms are alleviated; they then can be reintroduced in small amounts. External (exogenous) estrogens should be avoided (oral contraceptives, animal products with high estrogen content such as meats raised with the help of growth stimulators, etc.). The diet should emphasize whole, unprocessed foods: whole grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds. Drink at least 48 ounces of water daily.

Nutritional Supplements

High potency multiple vitamin and mineral formula as described in the chapter SUPPLEMENTARY MEASURES Lipotropic factors

Choline: 500-1,000 mg per day

Methionine: 500-1,000 mg per day

Vitamin B6: 25-50 mg three times per day

•Vitamin C: 500 mg three times per day

Vitamin E: 400-800 IU per day of d-alpha tocopherol

Beta-carotene: 50,000 IU per day Iodine (caseinate or liquid iodine): 70-90 mcg of iodine per kilogram of body weight per day (other forms of iodine 500 mcg daily)

Zinc: 15-30 mg per day

Flaxseed oil: 1 tablespoon per day Lactobacillus acidophilus: 1-2

billion live organisms per day