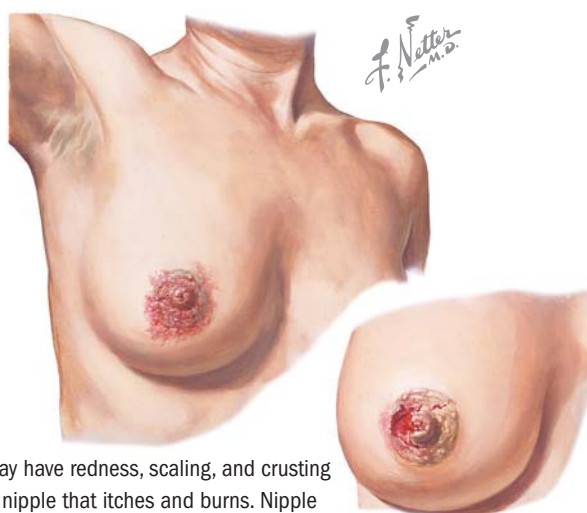


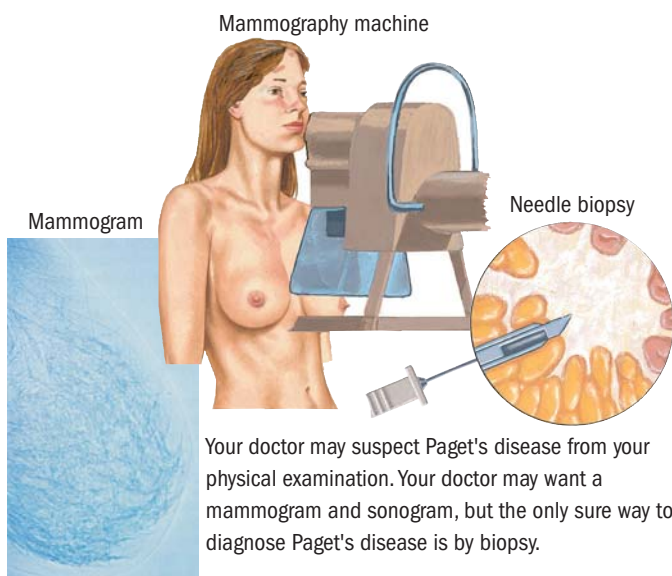
# MANAGING YOUR PAGET'S DISEASE OF THE BREAST



Paget's disease of the breast is a rare breast cancer. It's curable if found early, before it spreads. Paget's disease usually affects the nipple and the area under it. The cause is unknown.



You may have redness, scaling, and crusting of the nipple that itches and burns. Nipple drainage may also occur. You may feel a lump under the nipple.



Your doctor may suspect Paget's disease from your physical examination. Your doctor may want a mammogram and sonogram, but the only sure way to diagnose Paget's disease is by biopsy.

## What Is Paget's Disease of the Breast?

Paget's disease of the breast is a rare breast cancer. It usually affects the nipple and the area below. This disease, like other breast cancer, spreads to lymph glands (nodes) nearby and then through the blood stream to other parts of the body, such as bones, lungs, and liver. The cancer is curable if found early, before it spreads.

## What Causes Paget's Disease of the Breast?

The cause isn't known, but Paget's disease isn't contagious.

## What Are the Symptoms of Paget's Disease of the Breast?

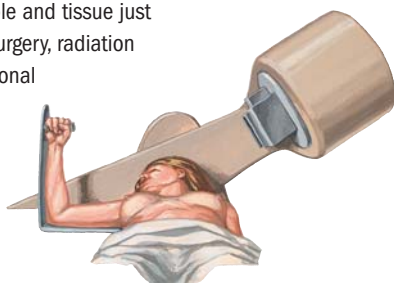
Redness, scaling, and crusting of the nipple that itches and burns may occur. Nipple drainage may also occur. A lump under the nipple may be felt.

## How Is Paget's Disease of the Breast Diagnosed?

The doctor may suspect Paget's disease from the physical examination. A mammogram and sonogram may be done, but the only sure way to diagnose Paget's disease is by biopsy. In a biopsy, a small piece of tissue from the area is removed and studied with a microscope.

After diagnosis, the cancer must be staged, to find out the extent of disease. Blood tests; computed tomography (CT) of the head, chest, and abdomen; and bone scans may be used for this. The surgeon needs to determine the tumor size, whether it has spread to lymph nodes, and whether the cancer has certain hormone receptors. This information is critical for treatment.

Therapy is similar to that for other breast cancers, except that the nipple and tissue just under it must be removed. Surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, or a combination of all these can be used.



Radiation



Exercise and good nutrition are important during and after treatment. Talk to your medical team about what you should be doing.



You are not alone. Find a support group to help you through your recovery.



If you don't have your breasts removed, do monthly breast self-examinations and remind other women you know to do the same.

## How Is Paget's Disease of the Breast Treated?

Therapy is similar to that for other breast cancers, except that the nipple and tissue just under it are removed. Surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, hormonal therapy, or a combination of all these are used. Treatment often involves a team of many specialists, including an oncologist (doctor specializing in cancer), surgeon, radiation oncologist (doctor specializing in radiation treatments), nutritionist, and social worker.

Side effects of surgery depend on the type of operation and how much breast tissue is removed (mastectomy or breast conserving operation). Removal of lymph nodes under the armpit may cause the arm to swell. Radiation side effects include red, dry, itchy skin over the radiation site; shortness of breath; coughing; and arm swelling.

Chemotherapy can cause nausea, vomiting, hair loss, easy bruising, bleeding, and infections.

Hormonal treatment can cause hot flashes, nausea, vomiting, irregular periods, vaginal bleeding, and rash.

## DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Paget's Disease of the Breast:

- ✓ **DO** keep your doctor appointments during and after treatment so your doctor can check your response to treatment and look for cancer that may recur.
- ✓ **DO** remember the importance of exercise and good nutrition during and after treatment.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you feel a lump, see nipple drainage, or feel swollen lymph glands under your armpits.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have fever, nausea, and vomiting after chemotherapy.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have back pain, leg weakness, stool or urine incontinence (leaking), or bone pain.
- ✓ **DO** find a support group if you think that would help you handle your disease.
- ⊘ **DON'T** ignore lumps, nipple discharge, or changes in nipple skin.

### FROM THE DESK OF

#### NOTES

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### Contact the following sources:

- American Cancer Society  
Tel: (800) 227-2345  
**Website:** <http://www.cancer.org>
- American College of Surgeons  
Tel: (312) 202-5000, (800) 621-4111  
**Website:** <http://www.facs.org>