Dear Alice,

What is in coffee that causes benign breast cysts?

Signed,

? Ex coffee drinker

Answer

Dear Ex coffee drinker,

Many people enjoy having coffee be a part of their diet ? benign breast cysts are not as enjoyable. Benign (pronounced bee-nine) breast cysts, also called fibrocystic condition, occur when breast cells retain fluid and develop small sacs. While benign breast cysts present no danger to life or well-being, they may make the breasts look lumpy or feel sore. This fluid retention and cyst development frequently occurs during ovulation and/or just before menstruation.

Coffee has been targeted as a potential cause of benign breast cysts specifically because of its caffeine content. However, the caffeine theory has not been proven scientifically. Still, some women have found that reducing their caffeine intake has coincided with reductions in the size and number of cysts. To see whether caffeine is affecting your body, you can keep a diet diary?. In this diary you can record the frequency and amount of caffeinated foods (such as chocolate) and/or drinks (such as coffee, colas, and energy drinks) that you consume, and when your breast cysts appear. By comparing breast cyst occurrence to caffeine intake, you may be able to determine what, if any, correlation there is for you.

While there isn?t much hard science to back up caffeine as the culprit for breast cysts, health care providers have made various recommendations for reducing benign breast cysts. These include:

- Reducing fatty and fried foods
- Reducing salt intake (this includes reducing salt added at the table and reducing the amount of high sodium foods that you eat and drink)
- Limiting all caffeine-containing foods, beverages, and aspirin
- Taking Vitamin B6 supplements (100 to 200 milligrams daily)
- Taking evening primrose oil (two to four grams daily)
If you have concerns about benign breast cysts, you may consider speaking with your health care provider. Adjusting your diet and heeding to advice from your health care provider may be just what you need—not only to understand benign breast cysts, but to make them go away as well.

Alice!
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