Cystic breasts affect up to 50 percent of pre-menopausal women between the ages of 20 and 50. Fibrocystic breast disease encompasses a variety of benign breast conditions associated with changes in breast physiology related to diet and hormonal fluctuations.

If you notice soft, tender, movable cysts in your breasts that are predominant one to two weeks before your period and diminish after your period, you may have this condition. These often painful cysts vary in size, are cyclic, and move freely in both breasts.

Causes
The condition may be due to a hormonal imbalance—either an increased estrogen to progesterone ratio, an upset in the estrone and estriol ratio, or an underactive thyroid which

Recommended supplements

- **Vitamin E**—mixed tocopherols: 600 IU daily
- **Beta carotene**—25,000 to 40,000 IU daily
- **Kelp tablets**—two daily
- **Evening primrose oil**—1500 mg daily, combined with 3000 mg flaxseed oil or quality fish oil
- **Vitamin B₃**—50 mg three times daily with meals and a B complex.
- **Coenzyme Q₁₀**—60 to 200 mg daily.
- **Chaste tree berry tincture**—30 drops three times daily
- **Xiao yao wan**—eight pills three times daily; and/or
- **Milk thistle and dandelion tincture**—25 drops three times daily
- **Hoxsey Formula**—15 to 30 drops, three times daily.
may cause elevated prolactin. Other research suggests that it may be due to high estradiol and low testosterone. It may also relate to nutritional deficiencies in vitamins E and B₆, iodine, coenzyme Q₁₀, or essential fatty acids. Sluggish bowels, an overburdened liver, and a diet too high in meat and the wrong fats are also implicated. Wearing a bra that is too tight for more than 12 hours a day may also contribute to this condition, as circulation of the lymph in the breast tissue is restricted.

The ingestion of methylxanthines, found in coffee, black tea, green tea, cola, chocolate, and caffeinated medications can contribute to fibrocystic breasts. The condition often improves when women stop using foods or drugs containing methylxanthines.

Since the liver breaks down hormones, any factor that interferes with proper liver function may lead to estrogen excess, promoting breast disease. Factors which impair liver function:

- environmental estrogens in plastics and pesticides
- chemicals in food
- bowel toxicity
- allergies
- decreased immunity
- polluted air and water
- toxic overload
- nutritional deficiencies
- use of drugs or alcohol
- stress
- suppressed emotions
- lack of exercise
- a diet high in fat, dairy, sugar, and/or wheat products.

Women having less than three bowel movements per week have a risk of fibrocystic breast disease four to five times greater than women having at least one a day. A high fibre, vegetarian diet with minimal or no dairy is the ideal diet for breast health. Use two tablespoons of organic, freshly ground flaxseed and another two tablespoons of uncooked flaxseed oil on your food daily for further protection. Turmeric, soy, rosemary, garlic, seaweed, and cabbage are additional foods that promote breast health.
