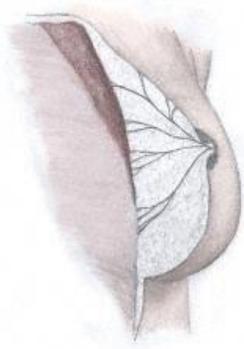


What does the breast consist of ?



The breasts are composed of mainly fatty tissue with the mammary glands and muscle. The muscle is deep so cannot help much in supporting the breast however, ligaments do help in holding the breasts up.

These ligaments are called Coopers Ligaments and are thin bands interwoven into the breast. They are not very strong and if the breasts are not supported properly with a good sports bra during vigorous exercise, then the repetitive bouncing can stretch these ligaments permanently.

The main injuries affecting breasts are nipple problems (joggers nipple or friction injury), a direct blow to the breast causing a contusion and repetitive trauma caused by constant movement and bouncing whilst running.

Repetitive trauma injury

Continuous running causes the breasts to move up and down and side to side. This not only causes pain resulting from the trauma of excessive movement but will result in permanent stretching of the Coopers ligaments resulting in drooping breasts. It is not just the larger breasted woman suffers breast pain when running but smaller breasted women can often suffer just as much.

It is also possible that breasts that are not properly supported can lead to tension and strain in the upper back and neck, particularly in the larger breasted woman. The excess weight at the front can mean the back muscles have to work harder to keep the shoulders in the correct position. These muscles will eventually become weak and stretched leading to back and neck pain.

What can you do about it ?

1. Wear the correct sports bra. This should give support and prevent vertical movement as well as side movement.
2. 'Breast droop' is irreversible, so prevention is better than cure.
3. For back pain try to correct posture with shoulders back. A regular sports massage is a great way of reducing the tension in the muscles
4. *To check out what bra you need, click on the logo on the right*

Injury resulting from direct trauma

Direct trauma can occur from being hit by a ball, a racket or even an opponent. A contusion (bleeding within the muscle or breast) may occur.

What can you do about it ?

1. Apply ice and support the area.
2. Occasionally if the injury is bad you may need to see a Doctor who will aspirate the injury (drain off the fluid with a needle).
3. Wearing the correct sports bra which can include padding for protection. In some sports such as martial arts, a plastic cupped bra can be worn over the top.

Joggers Nipple

This is a painful condition more common in men than women. It is in effect a friction burn caused by constant rubbing of a T-shirt on the nipple. It is often more likely in cold and wet weather.

What can you do about it ?

1. Protect the injury from further trauma and allow it to heal. This should not take long.

2. Again prevention is better than cure. The correct sports bra can help, as can applying petroleum jelly to the nipples or covering them with zinc oxide tape before running.

A good sports bra should have complete cups to prevent movement of the breasts in all directions. It should also have wide, non elastic straps. Any fasteners should be probably covered to prevent rubbing against the body.



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