All males have a small amount of breast tissue. Normally it does not develop into breasts. If it does, the condition is called gynecomastia. This can be embarrassing and even painful. Gynecomastia often goes away on its own. If it doesn’t go away or if it causes pain, there are treatments that can help.

What Are the Symptoms?
Males should see their health care providers if they have any of these symptoms in one or both breasts:

- A lump in the breast area
- Breast growth in a short amount of time
- Breast growth if you also have a lump on one of the testes (this may be a sign of testicular cancer)
- More than 2 to 3 inches of tissue under the nipple
- Pain or tenderness around or under the nipple

Males should also see their health care providers if any symptoms make them feel worried or embarrassed.

Is There a Test for Male Breast Development?
If a male has symptoms of breast growth, his health care provider will feel the breast area to check if it is breast tissue or fat tissue, which are not the same. Sometimes they need to do an X-ray of the breast area (called a mammogram). The doctor can also do blood tests to check certain hormone levels.

How Is Male Breast Development Treated?
If treatment is needed, there are many that can help. The choice of treatment depends on the cause of breast development, how long it has lasted, how severe it is, and if it causes any pain.

In teenage boys, breast development is usually caused by normal hormone changes at that age. In these cases, breast growth usually goes away without treatment. Still, doctors can give a medicine called tamoxifen to boys with very large or painful breasts.

In adult men, breast development is usually caused by a health problem or dietary supplement. It can also be a side effect of certain medicines. In these cases, treating the health problem or stopping the medicine or dietary supplement is usually successful. If the doctor can’t find the cause, he or she might prescribe tamoxifen. Men who have had breasts for more than a year may need surgery to reduce the size of the breasts.

Men with prostate cancer who were treated with hormone therapy sometimes develop breasts. They can take tamoxifen or have radiation treatment before getting hormone therapy to lower the chance of developing breasts.

For more information, contact Huntsman Cancer Institute’s Breast Imaging Clinic at 801-213-4269 or the G. Mitchell Morris Cancer Learning Center:

- Call toll free 1-888-424-2100
- Visit the sixth floor of the cancer hospital
- E-mail patient.education@hci.utah.edu
- Text “askhci” to 66746