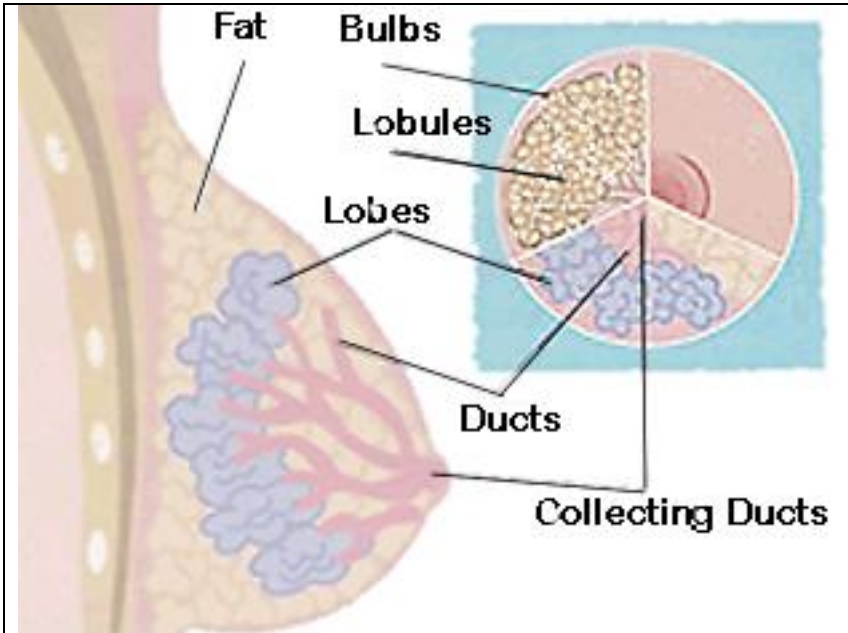


Anatomy of the Breast



Anatomy of the breast.
(Source: Restored Images)

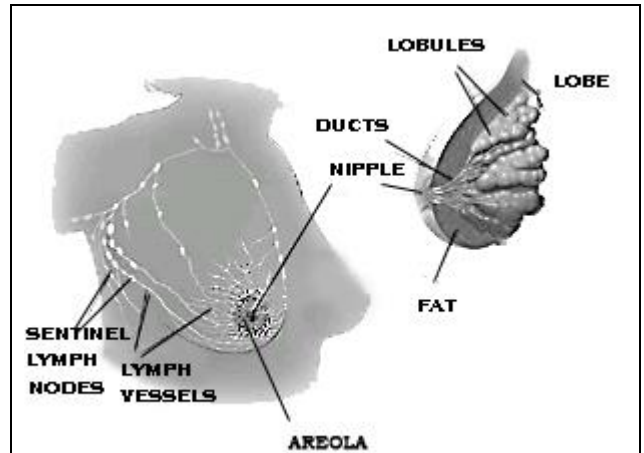
The breast, or mammary gland, is a sexual organ whose main job is to produce milk for a woman to feed her baby. It is made of different structures

Including:

- *lobules*, the structures that produce breast secretions
- *ducts*, along which these secretions flow to the nipple
- fat
- connective tissue
- blood vessels
- lymphatics
- the nipple and *areola* (the darker area around the nipple)

Breast cancers arise from the lobules and ducts.

The lymphatic system works throughout the body to filter out bacteria. In the breast, the lymphatic system is made of vessels that carry lymph fluid to small bean-shaped structures called *lymph nodes*. Only a few lymph nodes are found in the breast itself. Most of the lymph nodes that service the breast are found in the nearby tissue of the armpit (the *axilla*). Others are located above the collarbone or under the breastbone. When breast cancer spreads beyond the breast, it is typically seen first in these lymph nodes.



Lymphatic system of the breast.
(Source: National Institute of Health)