**BREAST PAIN (MASTODYNIA)**

Mastodynia is one of the most common breast complaints women have. Rest assured, in over 99% of women, this is benign. Breast tenderness/pain is NOT a typical symptom of breast cancer. Breast pain can be described in many different ways including, but not limited to: sharp, stabbing, pulling, burning, sensations, dull ache, itching. These feelings can be constant or intermittent (come and go). Having symptoms in only one breast is also very normal. Breast discomfort can occur in almost any part of the breast, but the upper outer aspect is the most common.

The normal physiology of the breast is constant lifecycle of changes dependent on the hormonal changes of the menstrual cycle and inflammation of the tissue. This is a NORMAL process in the breast. This is usually the result of **fibrocystic tissue**, which almost all women have to some degree. The treatment for this is typically always symptomatic.

In some cases, there can be an isolated lesion which can cause tenderness in one specific area, such as a **fibroadenoma, cyst**, or sometimes **mastitis (infection)**. Mammogram and ultrasound can help identify those cases and reassure the patient that they do not have cancer.

Diet can also sometimes affect the breast tissue. Very often, caffeine products (coffee, tea, soft drinks), chocolate, or other items can cause breast tenderness.

Dr. Ricardo & her staff can counsel the patient about breast pain/tenderness and give some suggestions of symptomatic treatment that the patient can try while waiting for their appointment. These include elimination of caffeine/chocolate from your diet, 800-1000 U of vitamin E daily, or evening primrose oil can help. These products can be found over the counter in any pharmacy department.