Anatomy of the Lactating Breast

1. Cooper’s Ligaments
   Provides support and a framework for the glandular and fatty tissue

2. Retromammary Fat
   Fat pad at the back of the breast, at the chest wall

3. Glandular Tissue
   The part of the breast that makes the milk

4. Intraglandular Fat
   Fatty tissue that is intermingled with the glandular tissue

5. Subcutaneous Fat
   Fatty tissue that lies just under the skin

6. Main Milk Duct
   The milk ducts that lead into the nipple

7. Milk Duct
   The ducts throughout the breast that transport the milk from the glandular tissue to the main milk ducts

- The ratio of glandular to fat tissue in the lactating breast is 2:1
- 65% of the glandular tissue is located in a 30 mm radius from the base of the nipple
- Fatty tissue is found in three areas:
  - Retromammary
  - Intraglandular
  - Subcutaneous
- The intraglandular fat is mixed with the glandular tissue and is difficult to separate
- Subcutaneous fat is minimal at the base of the nipple

- The ductal anatomy is similar for each breast but can vary greatly between women
- The main function of the ducts is the transport, not storage, of milk
- The ductal network is complex and the milk ducts are not always arranged in a radial or symmetrical pattern
- Resting duct diameter can differ greatly between women (range 1–4.4 mm)
- The ducts expand in diameter at milk ejection (average 58%)

- The main milk ducts at the base of the nipple are:
  - Approximately 2 mm in diameter
  - Superficial
  - Branching close to the nipple
- The conventionally described lactiferous sinuses behind the nipple do not exist
- The range of milk ducts exiting the nipple is 4–18

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Glandular and Fatty Tissue
Ductal Network
Main Milk Ducts