Mastalgia is commonly experienced by women and is RARELY an indication of BREAST CANCER. This algorithm should be used to manage mastalgia in primary care among PRE-MENOPAUSAL women who have a normal clinical breast examination and have no evidence of a discrete lump.

A pain chart should be completed for three consecutive months.

**Normal breast examination**
- REASSURE following a normal breast examination
- ASK patient to complete a pain chart daily for 3 consecutive months
- ADVISE patient to wear a correctly fitted bra
- ADVISE patient to use simple analgesia and/or evening primrose oil for 3 months

**Cyclical Pain**
- Usually occurs in women 20-50 years
- Associated with the menstrual cycle
- Usually occurs 3-7 days before menstruation but may occur from the time of ovulation
- Pain and tenderness in the upper outer quadrant of the breast
- REASSURE following a normal breast examination
- ASK patient to complete a pain chart daily for 3 consecutive months
- ADVISE patient to use simple analgesia and/or evening primrose oil for 3 months

**Non-Cyclical Pain**
- Usually occurs in women over 40 years
- Not associated with the menstrual cycle
- May arise from surrounding muscles or joints
- REASSURE following a normal breast examination
- ASK patient to complete pain chart daily for 3 consecutive months
- ADVISE patient to use simple analgesia and topical NSAID

Review after three months. If pain is intractable send referral to symptomatic breast unit accompanied by the completed pain chart.