

# Breast Cyst Aspiration (Ultrasound Guided)

## What is a breast cyst?

A breast cyst is a fluid-filled sac (like a tiny balloon). Typically breast cysts occur in women between the ages of 35 and 50, but are most commonly found in those approaching menopause. If you are past menopause and taking hormone therapy, breast cysts may still develop. Breast cyst size may vary and change depending on where you are in your menstrual cycle.

Most breast cysts occur in the upper half of your breast. They often enlarge and become tender or painful just before your period. They may seem to appear overnight. Breast cysts move easily to the touch. They may feel either soft or hard. When they are close to the skin's surface, they may feel like a blister, smooth on the outside, but fluid-filled on the inside. However, if the cyst is found more deeply in the breast, it may feel hard as there is more tissue surrounding it.

Women may have cysts in their breasts and not even be aware of them. Cysts are known to come back; in fact some women may get cysts several times during their life. Cysts are not cancer and do not change into cancer. However, there are rare instances where a cancer is growing within them or close to them. Simple cysts do not typically require treatment. For some women, breast cysts can be quite painful and they decide to have them drained.

## What is a cyst aspiration and why is it done?

The process of aspirating (draining) breast cysts is a simple one. It takes only a few minutes and usually causes no more discomfort than a blood test.

The radiologist will insert a thin needle attached to a syringe into the cyst. The doctor then draws out the fluid, collapsing the cyst like a punctured balloon.

Reasons for cyst aspiration include:

1. To confirm the lump is fluid-filled.
2. To prevent the cyst from hiding another change that could occur in the breast.
3. To reduce discomfort if the cyst is painful.
4. To remove the presence of a noticeable lump.

## How do I prepare for a cyst aspiration?

A nurse will try to call you at home before the procedure to obtain a brief health history, list of medications/supplements and any allergies you may have. If you take aspirin or other blood thinners, let the nurse know as this increases the risk of bleeding and bruising. You can eat and drink as usual. Take your usual medications the day of the procedure unless you have been instructed otherwise. Wear a two-piece outfit since you will remove your clothing from the waist up and a mammography cape will be worn.

## How do I schedule a cyst aspiration?

Your healthcare provider's office will schedule the procedure. An order from your healthcare provider is required prior to performing the procedure. If your healthcare provider has given you the order, make sure to bring it with you to your appointment.

To schedule a cyst aspiration at St. Luke's Breast & Bone Health, call Centralized Scheduling at 319/369-8129.

Any previous mammogram and/or breast ultrasound exams are needed prior to doing the exam.

## Where do I come for a cyst aspiration?

St. Luke's Breast & Bone Health is located at 202 10th St. SE, Suite 265 in the PCI Medical Pavilion. Please enter through the east entrance and go to the second floor. You may park in the attached ramp or free valet parking is also available at the front of the building.

## What can I expect during the cyst aspiration?

Ultrasound uses high frequency sound waves to image internal structures of your breast.

1. You will be positioned on your back or slightly turned to your side for the procedure. A nurse and an ultrasonographer will assist the radiologist with the procedure.
2. A cold, gel-like substance will be applied to your skin. The gel helps the sound waves travel through the breast for a better image of the breast tissue.
3. The ultrasound probe, or transducer, is placed on the gel and moved over the breast to locate the cyst(s) to be aspirated.
4. When the area has been located, it will be cleansed with hospital soap (unless allergic to iodine). The doctor will inject local anesthetic into the breast. This anesthetic is similar to what is used in the dental office.
5. A thin needle connected to a syringe is inserted into the breast. The radiologist will guide the needle to the area by constantly tracking the needle on the monitor screen.
6. Once the needle is placed, the radiologist pulls back on the syringe which creates suction on the fluid to pull it out of the cyst. Fluid is withdrawn until the cyst area is no longer seen on the monitor screen. Normal cyst fluid ranges in color from slightly yellow to dark greenish yellow. Cyst fluid that is bloody or the color of chocolate milk needs further evaluation.
7. After the procedure, pressure will be applied to the aspiration site to decrease any bleeding or bruising. An adhesive bandage will be applied. A small ice pack will be applied to decrease bruising and help numb the area.

## What happens after the cyst aspiration?

There will not be any restrictions on your activity or driving after the procedure. Unless you have an allergy, you may take acetaminophen or ibuprofen for any discomfort you experience. You may resume any usual medications/supplements that you take as well as your usual diet.

## When will I find out the results?

The radiologist will interpret the exam and make recommendations. The radiologist will discuss the **preliminary** results with you before you leave. A **final** report will be sent to your healthcare provider. Depending on the results, you may be referred to a surgeon for additional evaluations.