

## How do you know if you have a cyst?

- A cyst is a round lump that moves easily.
- It is either firm or 'spongy' when you press on it.
- It can be tender to touch.
- It can get bigger and more painful just before your menstrual period.
- Some cysts are so small you cannot feel but can be seen on a mammogram or ultrasound test.

All new breast lumps should be checked by a doctor right away.

## It's good to ask questions

If you have any questions, please call the Breast Health Clinic.

**We are here to support you!**

[www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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# Breast Cysts

## Breast Health Clinics

Monday to Friday

Jim Pattison Outpatient Care and  
Surgery Centre, Surrey 604-582-4563

8:00AM to 4:00PM

Abbotsford Regional Hospital,  
Abbotsford 604-851-4806

8:00AM to 3:00PM



## What is a breast cyst?

A simple breast cyst is a small sac filled with fluid. It is like a tiny balloon filled with water. Women can have one cyst or several cysts. Cysts can be in one or both breasts.

Cysts are usually found in women between 35 to 50 years old. Cysts often disappear at menopause.

Cysts are benign (sounds like 'bee-nine') which means 'not cancer'. Cysts cannot turn into cancer. If you have a cyst, it does not increase your chance of getting breast cancer.

Some cysts are called complex cysts. They are less common. These cysts might need more tests to make sure the tissue is healthy. Complex cysts need to be watched more carefully than simple cysts.

## What causes a breast cyst?

The cause of breast cysts is not known.

## How is a cyst treated?

Most breast cysts do not need to be treated.

If you have **no pain**:

- Know your breasts. Check them each month.
- Ask your family doctor to do a breast exam once a year.
- If you are over 40 years of age, have a screening mammogram every 1 to 2 years.

If you have a **small amount of pain**:

- Take acetaminophen (such as Tylenol or store brand) or ibuprofen (such as Advil, Motrin, or store brand).
- Wear a supportive bra (even at night). Many women do not wear the correct bra size. Visit a bra shop where specially trained people can help you find the right bra.

If your **cyst is large or painful**:

- The doctor might drain the cyst. To drain the cyst, a small needle is put inside the cyst and fluid is pulled out. The fluid can be green to milky brown in color. The cyst collapses like a balloon with a hole in it. This can reduce the pressure and pain.

- Sometimes we send the cyst fluid to our laboratory to be checked. The results usually take a week.
- The doctor might want you to have a biopsy to make sure the cyst is healthy breast tissue. A biopsy means a tiny amount of breast tissue is removed from the cyst. This sample is examined under a microscope in the laboratory.
- If the doctor wants you to have a biopsy:
  - We give you information about the biopsy and how to prepare for it.
  - We schedule you for the biopsy.
  - We give you an appointment to return to the Breast Health Clinic 7 to 10 days after the biopsy. The doctor talks to you about your results at that time.

## Can a cyst come back?

Cysts sometimes fill up with fluid again. They are treated the same way as the first time the cyst appeared.

If you feel a lump and it does not disappear after your menstrual period or after 2 to 3 weeks, arrange to see your family doctor.