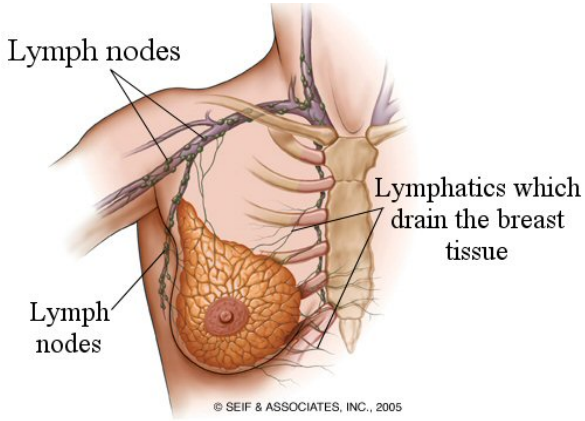
Breast Cyst Drainage

Breast cysts are fluid-filled sacs that form when normal milk glands enlarge. Breast cysts are very common, especially in women between the ages of 40 and 60. Breast cysts can happen during the hormone changes around a menstrual period, or because you have too much of the hormone estrogen. Breast cysts can be as small as a pea or as large as a ping-pong ball. You and your caregiver have decided that the best way to remove and examine the fluid in your cyst is to drain (*aspirate*) it with a fine needle, into a syringe. This is a minor surgical procedure and takes just a few minutes to complete. You might feel a mild stinging when your caregiver injects a local anesthetic to numb the area. Otherwise, you should feel no pain during the procedure. Sometimes, a caregiver will use a treatment called ultrasound to guide the needle into the cyst. After the fluid is removed, your caregiver might send the fluid to a lab for further testing.



BEFORE THE PROCEDURE

- Do not take aspirin or blood thinners for 1 week before the procedure. These medicines can cause bleeding.
- Your caregiver might want you to arrive early, to fill out paperwork and consent forms.
- You are allowed to eat and drink normally before the procedure.

LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies.
- Medicines taken, including herbs, creams, eye drops, and over-the-counter medicine.
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams).
- Previous problems with anesthetics or Novocain.
- History of bleeding or blood problems.
- Other health problems.
- Any past breast cysts and problems that may have occurred.
- Family history of breast cancer.
- Possibility of pregnancy, if this applies.

RISKS & COMPLICATIONS

Your caregiver will talk to you about possible problems before he or she performs the aspiration. Risks are small. You might have a little bruise on your breast. You might get an infection at the injection site. Other problems include:

- Bleeding.
- Feeling pain, because you are not numb from the anesthetic.
- An allergic reaction or problem with the anesthetic.
- The cyst coming back later.

Your caregiver will explain what to do if you experience any problems.

PROCEDURE

Breast cyst drainage is usually done in the caregiver's office. The breast is washed clean with an antiseptic solution. A local anesthetic (like Novocain) is given to numb the skin over the area of the cyst. A needle is then inserted through the numbed area of the breast into the cyst, and the fluid is drained. The fluid is then sent to the lab for examination, to see if there are any abnormalities that need further treatment.

AFTER THE PROCEDURE

- The injection site will be a little numb for a while, but that should soon pass. Your caregiver will probably put a small bandage on the drainage site.
- You might be able to drive home alone and go back to work or resume your normal activities after the procedure.
- You may be instructed to put cold compresses on the breast, to prevent bleeding and swelling.
- There may be bruising around the needle site. The bruising will go away in a couple of days.

FINDING OUT THE RESULTS OF YOUR TEST

Not all test results are available during your visit. If your test results are not back during the visit, make an appointment with your caregiver to find out the results. Do not assume everything is normal if you have not heard from your caregiver or the medical facility. It is important for you to follow up on all of your test results.

Under normal circumstances, your caregiver will probably want to see you again in 4 to 6 weeks, to make sure the cyst has not filled up with fluid again. It is important to keep that appointment. Cysts that refill with fluid can pose a problem.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- You may take pain medicine for discomfort, with your caregiver's permission.
- Follow your caregiver's instructions on breast care.
- Make an appointment for follow up care.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You see cloudy discharge from the drainage site.
- You see spreading redness of the skin around the drainage site.
- Your pain and/or swelling around the drainage site gets worse.
- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop chest pain or tightness.
- You develop a rapid heart rate.
- You have shortness of breath.
- You feel tired easily (*fatigue*).
- Your skin turns bluish color.
- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.

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