

# Preparing for Your Breast Ultrasound

## For patients at the Rapid Diagnostic Centre

Read this resource to learn:

- how to prepare
- what to expect during a breast ultrasound
- what questions to ask
- where to get more information

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## **About breast ultrasounds**

### **What is breast ultrasound?**

An ultrasound provides images of organs and soft tissues inside your body. It uses sound waves to make images. It does not use radiation. This test does not hurt.

### **Why do I need a breast ultrasound?**

A breast ultrasound helps the radiologist learn more about what a breast lump is made up of. It will show whether a lump is a fluid-filled cyst or a solid mass.

Ask your doctor these questions:

- Why do I need a biopsy?
- How long will it take?
- Will it hurt? Will I be awake?
- When will my results be ready?
- Who will give me my results? Do I need to book an appointment?
- What will the results show? What are the next steps?

## **Before a breast ultrasound**

### **How can I prepare for my breast ultrasound?**

You do not need to do anything to prepare for the ultrasound.

### **What should I bring to the appointment?**

- Your health card (OHIP card).

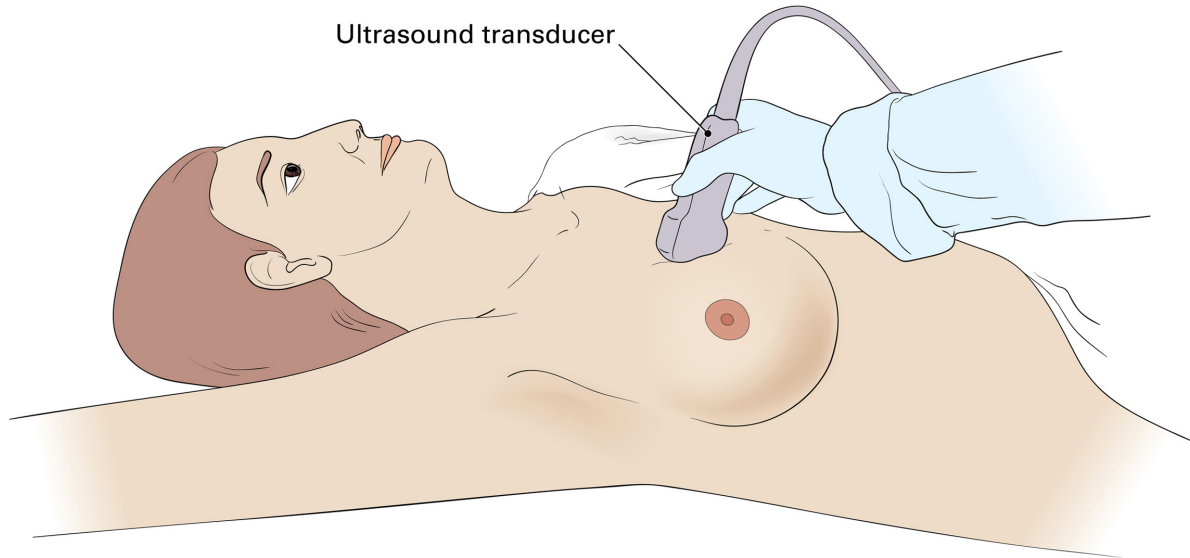
## During the breast ultrasound

### Who will do my breast ultrasound?

A technologist and /or a breast radiologist will perform the ultrasound. A breast radiologist is a doctor who specializes in breast imaging.

### What happens during a breast ultrasound?

1. You will change into a hospital gown.
2. You will lie face up, tilted slightly to the side.
3. The technologist and/or radiologist will put ultrasound gel on your skin. It will feel a little cool.
4. The technologist and/or radiologist will move a smooth tool across your skin. This is called a transducer. It sends the sound waves that create the ultrasound pictures.



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### How long does the breast ultrasound take?

It takes from 20 minutes to 1 hour.

## **After the breast ultrasound**

### **What should I do to take care of myself after the ultrasound?**

You do not need to do anything special after.

### **When will my results be ready?**

Your nurse practitioner will let you know after the testing appointment.

They will give you an appointment card with the time and place for your 2nd appointment to talk about the test results. This appointment may be on the day of testing or it may be a few days later.

### **What will my results show?**

This test will show whether the breast change is a fluid-filled cyst (not cancer) or a solid tumour. This will help you and your healthcare team plan what care you may need.

### **How can I deal with stress during this time?**

Getting tested for breast changes can be stressful. It is normal to have feelings of anxiety and distress.

These feelings can change over time. It may not be the same while you are waiting to receive testing. It may change during testing. It may also change while you are waiting for your results. Each person's experience is different. There is no right or wrong way to feel about this. This experience may mean different things to different people.

Think about what has helped you get through stressful and uncertain times in the past.

Try these tips to see if they offer you some relief:

- ✓ Talk to a supportive partner, family member or friend.
- ✓ Do an activity to help keep your mind busy. Try something you enjoy. Focusing on something other than the tests and results may help. This can include reading, listening to music, going to a movie, seeking spiritual guidance or going for a walk.
- ✓ Read trusted health information. This may help if you prefer to be informed before testing and while you wait for your results. The Princess Margaret Patient and Family Library has a many resources for patients and families. Find out more about the Library below.

If you would like to speak to someone about your concerns or feelings, please let your health care team know.

## Where can I get more information?

If you would like more information, go to:

- Patient and Family Library  
Main atrium, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre  
Phone: 416 946 4501 extension 5383  
Website: [www.library.theprincessmargaret.ca](http://www.library.theprincessmargaret.ca)

The Patient and Family Library offers trusted information about:

- cancer
- cancer treatment and care
- support organizations and services
- much more

Here you will find computer stations, books, brochures, DVDs, audio books, electronic books and CDs. Trained staff and volunteers can help with your questions and help you to find the information and resources you need.



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