BIOPSY OF THE BREAST

The majority of breast lumps are not cancer, but if a lump is discovered in your breast it may need a biopsy to determine what it is. A biopsy is a procedure, usually performed by a radiologist, which involves placing a needle through the skin into the area of interest, and taking a tissue sample for further analysis.

Why is there a need for needle biopsy?
Examination of the breast (i.e. feeling the breast tissue by an examining hand placed externally on the skin) is reasonably good in expert hands at deciding whether breast tissue is normal or not, but it is not foolproof.

Mammography Best Start
Both mammography and ultrasound, used to image the internal structure of the breast, fare better in their ability to differentiate abnormal tissue from normal and have the advantage over breast examination in that they can detect abnormal tissue that is too small to feel. In situations where both breast examination and imaging confirm that the breast tissue is normal or benign, needle biopsy is not necessary. This is the outcome in the majority of women (and men) presenting with breast symptoms.

For those cases with findings thought potentially significant after breast examination and imaging, needle biopsy is usually required to determine the exact nature of the abnormality; a significant proportion of these cases will prove to be benign on tissue analysis.

Normal Cysts Confirmed Quickly
Needle biopsy is a straightforward procedure, completed quickly with minimum discomfort. Using local anesthetic to numb the skin and deeper tissues, ultrasound or mammography imaging is used to guide a needle into the area of interest and take tissue samples. In those cases where the abnormality proves to be a breast cyst, this can be confirmed instantly.

For the remainder, the tissue sample is analyzed by a pathologist, a doctor who specializes in diagnosing abnormal tissue when viewed under the microscope, with the results being available within a few days. If your biopsy is performed in a specialist breast center, a breast specialist will be available to explain and discuss the results with you and answer your questions about what happens next.

David Green, M.D., Clinical Director and Breast Specialist Radiologist, Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre, is a Breast Specialist Radiologist and personally performs all biopsies at Bermuda Cancer and Health Centre. The tissue samples are tested by the Breast Specialist Pathologist Group at Brigham and Women’s Hospital (Boston) with results typically available in three to five days.
GET THE BENEFITS OF A wellness program

Developing and launching a workplace wellness program is a great way to improve the health and lifestyles of employees and their families. All types of organizations—from family-owned businesses to large companies—can benefit from the positive impact and lower healthcare costs of improved employee health.

Research shows that wellness programs work. They not only boost employee wellness, energy, and morale, but also improve the productivity and financial success of the organization. Through a wellness program, employees can learn to take a proactive approach to weight loss, physical fitness, nutrition, and more. These steps are vital to preventing and managing lifestyle-related chronic diseases, reducing absenteeism and healthcare costs, and increasing productivity.

Making a strategic investment in the health of your employees is not only smart, but essential. Costly chronic health issues, such as diabetes and heart disease, can be prevented by helping employees improve health behaviours that can prevent or better manage these conditions.

Workplace wellness programs include activities and education. Your program can include these simple programs:
- “Get in step!” 10,000-steps-a-day initiative
- Lunch-and-learns on healthy eating, nutrition, asthma care, diabetes prevention, exercise and more!

If you’re an employer and would like to learn more on how BF&M can help you get started with your very own Wellness Program, please contact your BF&M agent.

be prepared: ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

If you can no longer make your own decisions about treatment when ill, family members and doctors will use their best judgment. An advance directive form lets you decide how you would like to be treated if you cannot speak or write, and lets you name someone to speak for you. It can be revised at any time. There are two types:

Living will: This provides detailed instructions about the treatments you do and don’t want if you are incapacitated and require medical care to stay alive. It can ensure that your wishes are honored.

Medical power of attorney: You name a trusted relative or friend as your agent to make treatment decisions for you if necessary. It also could include your detailed preferences for end-of-life care.

Copies of your advance directive should be filed with your doctor, attorney, friends and/or family members, and the person you designate to make decisions for you.

Tasteful Tips to Cut Out Salt

By making a few changes in your shopping and cooking habits, you can still enjoy flavorful meals without salt.

Start by looking for reduced- or low-sodium versions of the foods you like, including soups, frozen dinners, and condiments, such as soy sauce. Select fresh vegetables, meat and fish, and frozen vegetables, which are lower in sodium than canned or processed versions. If you must use canned vegetables and beans, rinse the contents before using. Check the nutrition facts information on food packages. Cereals and other foods often have as much sodium as potato chips.

Stimulate taste buds with pepper, rosemary, basil, a few drops of lemon, lime, or other citrus juice, or vinegar.
Cancer-Fighting Tips, Quizzes, and More

Clients have access to a wide variety of quizzes, risk assessments, and more at Wellness Matters!, our online Wellness program. Test your breast cancer knowledge, discover cancer prevention tactics, and assess your risk for cervical, colon, and other types of cancers. You can also take a general Health Risk Assessment, accessible from the main page of your personal portfolio. Members can check out the free “Interactive Tools” section at www.bfm.bm to see many helpful resources that can provide a snapshot of your likelihood to develop some common conditions.

HEALTH Q&A

Start Smart: Have a Primary Care Physician

Why should I have a primary care physician?

A primary care physician (PCP) is an M.D. or D.O. who usually specializes as a family or general practitioner, providing care for people of all ages, or as an internist, focusing on adult medicine. To find one, ask your family and friends for referrals to doctors they like.

See your PCP first, not a specialist. Not only is the expertise of a specialist not always necessary, you may incur unnecessary higher out-of-pocket costs. The Bermuda Hospitals Board regulates that, on average, an outpatient doctor visit starts at $105, but a cardiologist visit starts at $142. That’s 35 percent more.

Trust your PCP with you and your family’s health, and to point you in a specialist direction when required. If so, he or she may already have a relationship with many specialists, and can refer you to one with the best experience for your condition.

HEALTH HIT

Beware the Chair

It’s time to get up. Prolonged sitting seems to raise triglyceride levels, reduce amounts of high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or “good,” cholesterol, and decrease the body’s ability to use insulin. These are risk factors for diabetes and heart disease, which, according to a study in the Archives of Internal Medicine, may lead to a higher risk of death among the sedentary.

Exercising and spending less than eight hours a day sitting is essential. Got a desk job? Try these ideas to stay moving when you can:

- Take your lunch to a local park. Stroll around before you eat.
- Got a standing meeting? Make it a walking one.
- Consider an active commute. If you can’t walk or cycle, try public transit. Bus riders walk 30 percent more per day than drivers.
It's time to start a new academic year. Help your child make it a good one. Here's how.

**Eat Smart:** First, start their day off with a healthy breakfast! Replace snacks that have no nutritional value, such as chips, donuts, candy, muffins, and chocolate, with healthy ones like apple slices, bananas, carrot sticks, dried fruit, and nuts. A study showed that kids who ate healthy were less likely to fail standardized reading and writing tests. Plan a diet made up of a variety of healthy foods, with all the recommended servings from each food group.

**Watch Less:** Kids with TVs in their rooms tend to score lower on standardized tests than those who don’t have tubes in their rooms. Set aside a set time in the day for TV watching, or better yet, use television as a reward for finishing homework and projects. Encourage educational television programs when appropriate.

**Backpackers Beware:** A backpack overloaded with textbooks, notepaper, binders, and other supplies may be too great a load for your child and could actually hurt his or her back. Make sure students carry only 10 percent to 15 percent of their body weight on their back. For instance, a child who weighs 100 pounds should carry about a 10- to 15-pound backpack.

**Ask Questions:** Get involved with your child’s day. Open the lines of communication between you and your child by asking how their school day went. Pay attention to all they say, no matter how insignificant the topic may be for you. Sometimes the things you might think are the least significant can be the most important to your child. This encourages them to open up about everything, not just things they think you want to hear.

Want to find out more about the health topics in this issue? Call the resources below or visit the “BF&M Resources Guide” section of our Online Wellness Centre at [www.bfm.bm](http://www.bfm.bm).