**I found a lump in my breast – now what? Understanding different types of non-cancerous breast lumps**

**Johannesburg - It is common to find a lump in your breast and immediately feel concerned, considering the worst-case scenario. However, take comfort in knowing that most breast lumps are** [**benign**](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/6270-benign-breast-disease) **(non-cancerous) and will not develop into breast cancer. The safest approach when dealing with any breast lump is to have it examined by a medical professional. Regardless of how often you examine your breasts, it can't be assumed that the breast lump is of no concern.**

**What are some common benign breast diseases?**

* **Breast cysts –** These are masses that may feel like lumps but are actually fluid-filled sacs in the breast. About 25% of breast lumps are these fluid-filled cysts. They can be tender and lumpy but do not increase the risk of cancer. Breast cysts are more common in women aged 35 to 50. In most cases, cysts go away without treatment, but medical professionals do drain larger or uncomfortable cysts with a needle.
* **Fibroadenomas -** These are the most common non-cancerous solid breast tumours, often found in women aged 15 to 35, but they can occur in individuals who menstruate. They usually feel firm, smooth and rubbery, resembling a pea in the breast. Fibroadenomas can move easily within the breast tissue when touched. If you have a [fibroadenoma,](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/fibroadenoma/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20352756#:~:text=When%20you%20may%20need%20surgery,giant%20fibroadenomas%20and%20phyllodes%20tumors.) your healthcare provider may advise monitoring for changes in size or texture. A biopsy or surgery may be necessary to check or remove the lump, although many fibroadenomas dissolve on their own without further treatment.
* **Fibrocystic breast changes –**Fibrocystic breasts are not uncommon. Medical professionals no longer use the term "fibrocystic breast disease" as it is not a disease. Fluctuating hormone levels can cause breasts to feel lumpy, dense and tender, particularly before menstruation. Women aged 30 to 50 are more likely to experience fibrocystic breast changes, which usually go away without treatment.
* **Hyperplasia -** This condition is characterised by an overgrowth of cells in the breast. It usually develops naturally with age as the breast changes. Hyperplasia is more common in women over 35 but can affect women of any age. A condition called 'usual hyperplasia' does not increase the risk of cancer and does not require treatment. However, if you have 'atypical hyperplasia', your healthcare provider may recommend surgically removing the affected breast tissue as it may make you more susceptible to breast cancer.
* **Intraductal papilloma –** These are small, wart-like growths that develop inside the mammary duct near the nipple. Intraductal papilloma may cause nipple discharge. The condition predominantly affects women aged 30 to 50. Surgery can remove these growths if there are five or more papillomas at once, thereby reducing the cancer risk.

**When should you contact a medical professional?**

A clinical examination and a simple, painless investigation such as an ultrasound or breast sonar (performed by a radiologist, along with a mammogram if over 35 years) are the best ways to determine the nature of the breast lump. If any of the following occurs, it is important to contact a medical professional promptly:

* Discovering a new lump in your breast or armpit
* Experiencing nipple discharge
* Noticing a change in the look and feel of your breast
* When you experience an inverted nipple
* Experiencing abnormal breast pain
* Experiencing unexplained redness, swelling or skin irritation

The results from your radiologist might include some unfamiliar terminology and diseases. Certain breast conditions can increase your susceptibility to developing lumps, but undergoing tests and understanding the language used in your results can provide reassurance. Breast health awareness plays a crucial part in your overall well-being. Detecting lumps early allows your healthcare provider to diagnose the issue and develop appropriate treatment plans.

Medshield Medical Scheme offers various benefits options that cover breast health, along with medical aid coverage for Breast Screening (mammograms) and access to Gynaecologists, Oncologists, Cardiologists, Psychiatrists, Psychologists and Specialist Physicians.

**FIN**

(632 words)

**EDITORS NOTES**

**FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW REQUESTS**

* Stone issues this release on behalf of the Medshield Medical Scheme.
* For media enquiries or interview requests, please contact Willem Eksteen, CEO of Stone or a media liaison member of the Stone team at media@stone.consulting / 011 447 0168
* Alternatively, contact Lilané Swanepoel at Medshield at 010 597 4982 / lilanes@medshield.co.za

**MORE INFORMATION ON THE 2023 MEDSHIELD BENEFIT OPTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

Benefits and Contribution amendments are subject to CMS approval.

Please refer to the 2023 Product Page on the Medshield website at <https://medshield.co.za/2023-benefit-options/>. You can review the benefit adjustments and value adds and download the 2023 benefit guides.

* **MediSwift** is an unlimited hospital plan that covers 100% of hospital procedures and allows active, healthy individuals the freedom to manage their own daily healthcare, with an added biokinetics and physiotherapy benefit for non-professional sportsmen and women.
* **MediCurve** is an affordable digital plan that enables young, healthy, tech-savvy, first-time medical aid buyers to cover without any financial strain on their day-to-day lives. MediCurve offers a bouquet of In-Hospital and Out-of-Hospital benefits with free, unlimited virtual Family Practitioner consultations through the Medshield SmartCare benefits.
* **Premium Plus** provides the most comprehensive cover with freedom of choice, including no network restrictions, 200% cover for specific in-hospital procedures and a Personal Savings Account to manage daily healthcare.
* **MediCore** is more than just a comprehensive hospital benefit. It accommodates your current and future medical needs by allowing you the flexibility to manage your daily healthcare requirements, with cover for specific in-hospital procedures at 200%.
* **MediSaver** offers unlimited In-Hospital cover through the Medshield Hospital Network whilst members manage their own Out-of-Hospital medical requirements through a Personal Savings Account. As an added benefit, the MediSaver option offers an Out-of-Hospital maternity package. It is perfect for independent individuals who want to manage their healthcare expenses and are considering expanding their families.
* **MediBonus** provides families and professional individuals unlimited In-Hospital cover with selected In-Hospital procedures paid at a Medshield Private Tariff of 200% and the freedom to manage their daily healthcare expenses through a Day-to-Day Limit.
* **MediValue** is ideal for individuals who need complete cover for hospital procedures or emergencies and partial daily healthcare cover. The MediValue option has two categories MediValue Prime and MediValue Compact. The benefits of both types are the same. Still, for a smaller contribution, the MediValue Compact category requires using networks, care coordination, and nominating a Family Practitioner and Family Practitioner-to Specialist referrals.
* **MediPlus** is the answer for middle- to upper-income earners needing out-of-hospital healthcare coverage. Members have unlimited In-Hospital cover through the Medshield Hospital Network, and the daily Out-of-Hospital body includes a range of benefits. The Prime and Compact choices suit families and individuals, allowing you to manage your health proactively.
* **MediPhila** You never know when you, or your loved ones, may require medical care that could result in substantial costs. Fortunately, as a MediPhila member, you have unlimited hospital cover for PMB conditions and generous per-beneficiary limits for non-PMB In-Hospital treatments. Additionally, your basic daily healthcare needs are covered with an Out-of-Hospital benefit limit for specific services.

**Medshield Medical Scheme - Live Assured knowing you have a Partner for Life.**

**ABOUT MEDSHIELD MEDICAL SCHEME**

* Medshield is a healthcare fund where all members contribute towards the fund monthly to cater for medical cover should the need arise.
* Medshield has been in operation since 1968, making us one of the most experienced, knowledgeable, and reliable medical schemes in South Africa. Our extensive experience in the healthcare sector guides our understanding of our members' needs. Our excellent cover and benefits combined with the best quality systems and services have resulted in our exceptional size and strength.
* Each of our options offers affordably priced benefits. We continuously review and improve the range of benefits in each option to bring you what you need.
* Our impeccable reputation of prompt payments to hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and other medical caregivers guarantees approval from service providers when you present your Medshield membership card.
* Our extensive partner networks place us in the perfect position to offer exceptionally competitive rates to our members.
* Medshield is well-represented throughout all nine provinces and provides seamless access to service providers in your area. Our geographical spread provides convenience if it becomes necessary for you to have a personal discussion with one of our experienced consultants. We also have a streamlined online claim submission system and immediate contact centre assistance, making it easier to manage your membership and claims from the convenience of your home or office.
* Our extensive range of additional benefits and services is another distinguishing factor. Our benefits and services have been designed to give members additional support when they need it most, for instance, in an emergency or when suffering from a chronic or life-threatening condition.
* Compared with other medical schemes, our trustworthiness, impeccable history, and exceptional service guarantee that we come out tops!