

## Get Tests for Dog's Chest Mass

**Take the opportunity to have mass diagnosed at vet school.**

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Q. My Chesapeake Bay Retriever has an unknown mass between the thoracic inlet and the heart. The vet school wants to do an ultrasound-guided aspiration to determine what the mass is. They suspect possible bacteria, fungus, vegetation, or a tumor. She has a small pleural effusion at present. What are your thoughts about putting my dog through this procedure and the possible outcome?

A. To translate your information into somewhat simpler terms, it sounds like vets at a nearby veterinary school have done some X-rays and noticed a mass in your dog's chest. Now they want to use an ultrasound machine to guide a needle into the mass so a sample of the cells can be obtained. Once these cells are examined by a pathologist under a microscope, hopefully a diagnosis can be made.

Although there is some risk to this procedure, it is minimal, and the benefits could be huge. Getting a diagnosis on this type of mass will determine what treatment is needed. That could range from surgical removal to antibiotics to antifungal therapy.

Hopefully, this mass is something that can be treated with medication, but if surgery is recommended, a veterinary school is the place to have it done. These schools have highly trained surgeons and excellent anesthesia teams.

Don't hesitate to get this procedure done so you can get some answers. Be aware that occasionally an exact diagnosis is not made, but usually your veterinarian will be able to rule out many of the possible diseases on the list, and make recommendations for treatment.