

Your Breast Biopsy

Stereotactically Guided Breast Biopsy

WHAT IS A NEEDLE BIOPSY?

The biopsy is done with a needle and will be performed by the radiologist. A biopsy needle is placed in the breast from which the sample is needed. X-rays are used to help guide the needle into the proper place. After the sample is taken through the needle, the tissue is looked at under a microscope.

WHY AM I HAVING A NEEDLE BIOPSY?

Your doctor uses information from many different kinds of tests and x-rays to help decide your diagnosis. If the doctor needs to know more about something that was seen in a previous test or x-ray, he or she may request a stereotactic needle biopsy. The sample from the biopsy can be used to determine the kind of cells or fluids you have in your breast. With this information, the doctor will decide if you need any special treatment and what kind of treatment is best for you.

HOW DO I GET READY FOR MY NEEDLE BIOPSY?

There is generally no special preparation for a biopsy. You should take a good bath or shower the night before or the morning of your biopsy. You may eat light meals the day of the biopsy.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE X-RAY ROOM?

If you haven't done so already, you will be asked to sign a "consent form." The x-ray doctor or technologist will explain more about how your biopsy will be done. They will discuss the risks of having a biopsy. When you sign the consent form, you have given the doctor permission to go ahead with the exam.

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown. It will only be necessary to undress from the waist up, so you may want to wear pants or a skirt.

Let someone know if you need to go to the bathroom as you will not be allowed to leave the x-ray table after your biopsy is started. The x-ray staff will do their best to make you as comfortable as possible.

Your biopsy may be done in an x-ray room that has a special x-ray machine and table where you will lie face down with your breast protruding through an opening. Special equipment will produce exact pictures of the area of your biopsy. As with a routine mammogram, your breast will be compressed during the procedure.

The x-ray doctor will look at the area he or she plans to biopsy. A picture will be taken of this area. When each picture is taken, you will be asked to "hold your breath" and "don't move."

HOW IS THE BIOPSY DONE?

The doctor will clean the biopsy site with a cool iodine solution. This kills the germs on your skin. The area for biopsy will be numbed. You will feel a quick burning sensation, like having your mouth numbed by a dentist.

Once the area is numb, a small "nick" is made to admit the biopsy needle into the biopsy site. You may hear a "click" when the needle is released. The doctor will ask you to "hold your breath" as this is done. You may feel pressure as the needle goes in but there is usually no pain. It will be necessary to take a few pictures at intervals to show the position of the needle in your breast.

When the needle is in the proper location, a small amount of tissue sample is withdrawn. To ensure adequate sampling, several samples are taken. These tissue samples are taken to a pathologist where they will be placed under a microscope to help determine a diagnosis.

After the needle is taken out, someone will hold pressure on the site for a few minutes. Then a bandaid will be placed on the breast. You will be given an ice pack to wear in your bra for an hour after the biopsy. You may have mild bruising, and soreness in the breast for the first few days.

WHAT DO I DO AFTER MY BIOPSY?

There are no activity restrictions following your breast biopsy, except for avoiding heavy lifting and strenuous activity. You may take Tylenol (not aspirin) for mild pain. You will be given written instructions with a number to call if you have problems or questions.

HOW LONG DOES THE EXAM TAKE?

Your breast biopsy may take 30 minutes to 2 hours. Usually the doctor can get an adequate tissue sample fairly quickly. Sometimes it may take longer. Please understand that you will have to wait a few minutes while each sample is taken, as several samples are needed. Someone will always be nearby to help you in any way.

WHEN WILL I KNOW THE RESULTS?

Your doctor usually receives the results of your biopsy in about 2 working days. After this he or she can talk with you about any further plans for your care.

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healthcare provider. If you have a medical problem or a health-related question, consult your physician or call Health On-Call at 336-716-2255 or 1-800-446-2255.

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