

Your Needle Biopsy

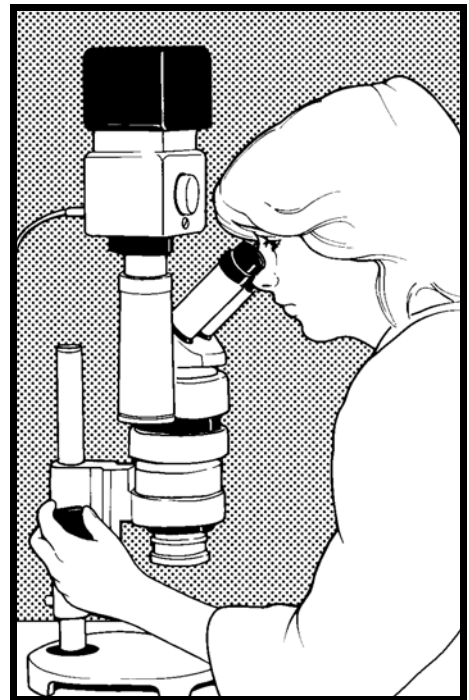
A Patient Education Series from the
Department of Radiology

Thank you for choosing Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. Please let us know if you have questions or concerns or do not understand the information we give you. Always ask us to explain words or phrases you do not understand.

This handout will review what you can expect before, during, and after your needle biopsy.

What is a needle biopsy? What does it show?

A needle biopsy is a special way to get tissue samples from inside your body without surgery. A doctor will place a needle in the part of your body from which the sample is needed. This is called a biopsy (BYE op c). X-rays or ultrasound waves are used to help guide the needle into the proper place. After the sample is taken, the tissue is looked at under a microscope.



Why am I having a needle biopsy?

Your doctor uses information from many kinds of tests and x-rays to make your diagnosis. If the doctor needs to know more about something that was seen in another test or x-ray, your doctor may request a needle biopsy. With this information, the doctor will decide what kind of treatment is best for you.

Your doctor can get a tissue sample (biopsy) from many organs of the body. Examples are kidney, lung, pancreas, liver, or bone.

Please let someone know if you may be pregnant; x-ray may harm an unborn child.



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How do I get ready for my needle biopsy?

You do not need to do anything special before your biopsy. You should take a good bath or shower the night before or the morning of your biopsy. **If you think you may need medicine for pain or anxiety during your biopsy, do not eat 6 hours before the exam. You may drink clear liquids up to 2 hours before your exam.**

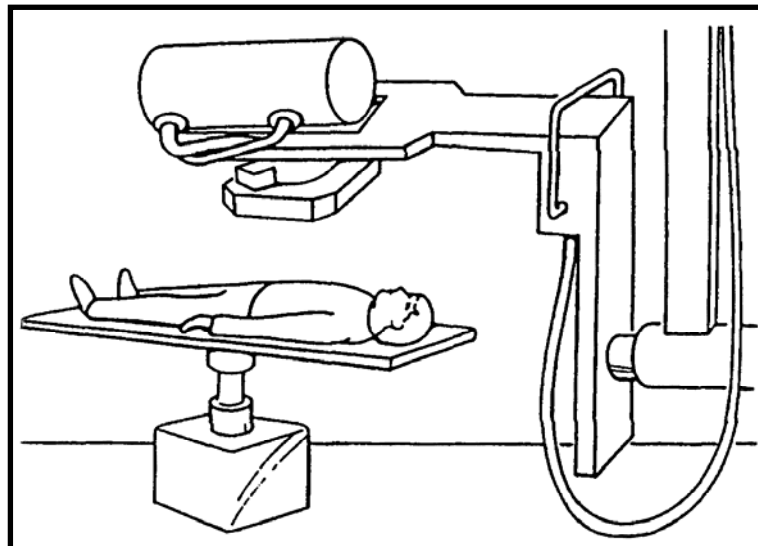
If you have pain, you may take your pain medicine before the biopsy. If you take medicine to thin your blood, ask your doctor if you should stop taking it a day or so before your biopsy.

Where do I go for my biopsy?

Your biopsy will be done in the Radiology Department on the first floor of Reynolds Tower.

If you are an outpatient, ask someone to come with you. You may get medicines that make you drowsy and will need someone to take you home. Your friend or family member can wait in our waiting room while you have your biopsy.

You may have the biopsy in an x-ray room that uses **fluoroscopy**. This means the doctor can see inside your body with “continuous x-ray motion.” Your doctor will watch an image of your body on a monitor that looks like a TV screen.



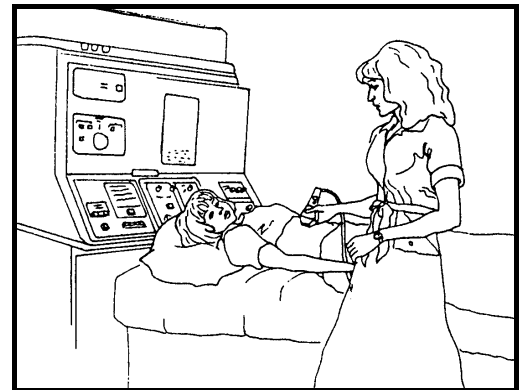


Many biopsies are done in a **CT scanner**. Here, you will lie on a table that moves very slowly toward a large doughnut-shaped opening. We take pictures of your body and feed the pictures into a computer. The computer makes images that look like thin detailed sections of your body.

For a CT scan, you may drink a special liquid (called contrast) with water. This makes certain parts of your body show up more clearly on the CT scan. You also may receive contrast through an IV or a needle in your arm or hand.

Your biopsy may be done with **ultrasound**. The device that looks like a microphone is called a transducer. The technician will move it lightly on your skin above the organ that will be biopsied. Sound waves produce images of organs in your body. There are no x-rays or radiation with ultrasound.

A technician will put a gel or mineral oil on your skin in the area to be studied. The gel prevents air from getting between the transducer and your skin. The transducer will be moved around in the gel to produce images. You will not hear or feel the special sound waves.



What will happen in the exam room?

The x-ray doctor or staff will explain more about your biopsy and the risk involved. When you sign the consent form, you give the doctor permission to go ahead with the exam.



You will wear a hospital gown. Most of the time you only need 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. You cannot leave after the biopsy has started.

Staff will help you onto a special table. You will lie on your back, side or stomach, depending on the organ that will be biopsied. You will have a blood cuff on your arm. The sticky pads on your chest will be connected to a heart monitor. You will have a

device that looks like a big clothes pin placed lightly on your finger to measure your oxygen level. The x-ray staff will do their best to make you as comfortable as they can.

If you are very nervous or have a lot of pain, the x-ray doctor may ask a nurse to start an IV (needle in a vein of your arm or hand) in case you need medicines during the exam.

When a picture of the organ is taken, someone will ask you to “hold your breath” and “don’t move.”

How is the biopsy done?

The doctor will clean the biopsy area with iodine. This kills germs on your skin. The doctor will put a sterile sheet around the clean area. Someone will tell you where to place your arms so you don’t touch the sterile sheet.

The doctor will inject medicine to numb the biopsy area. You will feel a quick burning sensation, like having your mouth numbed by the dentist.

Once the area is numb, the doctor will put a special needle through the skin into the organ. The doctor will ask you to hold your breath as this is done. You may feel pressure as the needle goes in, but you should not feel pain.

The doctor will take a few pictures to show that the needle is in the right place. Then, the doctor will take a small amount of fluid or tissue samples. Someone will be nearby to look at the sample through a microscope. Your doctor may take more samples until he can make a diagnosis. Someone will take the final sample to the lab for a closer look and testing.

After the doctor removes the needle, he or she will put a bandage or something like a Band-Aid[®] over the site. If there is bleeding, someone will hold pressure on the site for a few minutes.

What do I do after my biopsy?

Staff will explain what you can do after your biopsy. These instructions may vary according to the kind of biopsy you have.

Sometimes the x-ray doctor will ask that you stay in the x-ray department for a short time. This is to make sure you are not having problems such as bleeding or shortness of breath. Often, the doctor will want one final picture before you are released from x-ray.

How long does the exam take?



Your biopsy may take 30 minutes to two hours. As a rule, the doctor can get a tissue sample fairly quickly. Sometimes it may take longer. Please know that you will have to wait a few minutes while each sample is examined under the microscope. Someone will be nearby if you need help.

When will I know the results?

Your doctor usually gets the results of your biopsy in about 3 days. After this, he or she can talk with you about further plans for your care.

We care about your care!

We understand that you may be anxious about your needle biopsy. Please ask us to explain words or phrases you don't know and let us know about any questions you may have. Thank you for allowing us to participate in your care.

Radiology Department

Monday – Friday

7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Telephone: (336) 716-3560

This information is general. If your doctor tells you something different, follow his or her advice and instructions.

Reviewed 2007 by:

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