

Breast Biopsy

WHAT IS A BREAST BIOPSY? HOW IS IT DONE?

A breast biopsy is the removal of a sample of breast tissue for pathology examination. A breast biopsy is usually done to evaluate a lump found during a breast examination or to study a suspicious area found on a mammogram or breast ultrasound.

Your breast biopsy will be performed in an Ultrasound or Mammography suite in the Breast Centre by a Radiologist and assisted by a Sonographer/Technologist. The procedure will be explained to you by the Radiologist and you will be asked to sign a consent form that says you understand the risks of a breast biopsy and agree to have the test before the procedure begins. For the procedure, you will be asked to change into a hospital gown and to lie on your back on a padded table or sit in a biopsy chair. Your hands may be at your sides or raised above your head (depending on which position makes it easier to locate the area to be biopsied).

Ultrasound or mammographic images are obtained and once the area of interest is in view, the breast is cleaned with an antiseptic solution. An injection of local anesthetic may be given to numb the area of the breast where the needle will be inserted.

A fine-needle aspiration biopsy is done by inserting a thin needle into the suspicious area and removing cells that are then

examined under a microscope. Fine needle aspiration is sometimes done to distinguish between a solid lump and a fluid-filled lump (cyst). This type of biopsy does not usually require local anesthetic. If there is little or no fluid, the lump probably is not a cyst and a core needle biopsy will need to be done.

A core needle biopsy is done using a larger needle. After the injection of local anesthetic, a tiny incision is made. As the needle goes through the skin into the lump (or suspicious area found during the mammogram or breast ultrasound), it collects a core of tissue.

Once the procedure is completed, the needle is removed and pressure is applied to the needle site to help stop the bleeding. The biopsy site is then bandaged with gauze pads and steri-strips.

The procedure may take up to 60 minutes and approximately four to five samples will be obtained. These samples are then sent to the laboratory for analysis and your doctor will receive the biopsy results in 10 to 14 days.

HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR A BREAST BIOPSY?

Inform the Medical Imaging staff if you:

- are or might be pregnant
- have had any bleeding problems
- are allergic to any medications, including anesthetics

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AFTER THE BIOPSY?

WHAT CAN/SHOULD I DO AFTER THE PROCEDURE?

The biopsy site may feel sore and tender for a couple of days. It is recommended that you avoid strenuous activity for the remainder of the day.

You may wish to make arrangements to be driven home after your procedure (at patients' discretion). Place an ice pack wrapped in a towel on the biopsied breast for about 10-20 minutes every hour for the next three to four hours. You can put this ice pack underneath your bra if you wish. Frozen peas or vegetables can be substituted for the ice, but remember to wrap with a thin towel.

Ensure that the biopsy site remains dry. Do not remove special bandages that were placed on the incision site. Once they fall off, apply the second set of bandages given to you and let these fall off by themselves. Wait for 24 hours after your biopsy to take a shower.

If you suffer from any fever, redness, tenderness or pain three to seven days after the biopsy, see your doctor.

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