Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Caring for Yourself After Your Image-Guided Breast Biopsy

This information will help you care for yourself after your ultrasound, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), or stereotactic (STAYR-ee-oh-TAK-tik) breast biopsy.

Caring for the biopsy site at home

Follow these guidelines to care for the biopsy site after your procedure.

- Keep the bandage on the biopsy site until the day after your biopsy.
- Leave the Steri-Strips™ (thin strips of paper tape) on the biopsy site. If they do not fall off on their own in 5 days, you can take them off.
- You can shower 24 hours (1 day) after your biopsy. Take off your bandage before showering but leave the Steri-Strips in place. Let the shower water run over the biopsy site. When you get out of the shower, gently pat the site dry with a clean towel.
    - If there's drainage coming from the biopsy site, cover it with a clean bandage (Band-Aid®). Otherwise, you do not need to put a bandage on the site after you shower.
- You may have some swelling and bruising after your biopsy. If you do, put an ice pack on the biopsy site for 10 to 15 minutes at a time. Do this a few times during the first 24 to 48 hours (1 to 2 days) after your biopsy. It will help reduce swelling. The swelling and bruising should go away in about 1 week.
    - **If you have sudden swelling along with severe (very bad) pain, go to the nearest urgent care center.** If you live in or near Manhattan, you can go to MSK's Urgent Care Center (UCC). To learn more, see the "Contact

information" section at the end of this resource.

- Wear a tight-fitting bra to help support the biopsy site and make you feel more comfortable. Your radiologist will tell you if you need to wear any special type of bra after your biopsy.
- For 3 days after your biopsy, do not:
  - Lift anything heavier than 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms).
  - Do any strenuous (heavy) exercises, such as running or jogging.
  - Bathe, swim, or soak the biopsy site under water. You can shower 24 hours after your biopsy.
- If the biopsy site is bleeding, press firmly on it with a gauze pad until the bleeding stops. If the bleeding soaks through the gauze pad and does not stop after applying pressure for 10 to 20 minutes:
  - **Call the MSK Breast Nursing Care Team.** They're available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Outside those hours, call the healthcare provider who ordered your biopsy. To learn more, see the "Contact information" section at the end of this resource.
  - **Call your primary MSK oncologist (cancer doctor).** If their office is closed, follow the prompts to reach MSK's After-Hours Telephone Triage (AHTT) call center. To learn more, see the "Contact information" section at the end of this resource.
  - **Go to an urgent care center.** Get care at an urgent care center close to home or at MSK's Urgent Care Center (UCC) in Manhattan. To learn more, see the "Contact information" section at the end of this resource.
  - **Go to an MSK Symptom Care Clinic (SCC).** Get care at the nearest SCC, located at regional sites in New Jersey, Westchester County, and on Long Island. To learn more, see the "Contact information" section at the end of this resource.

  If you have a life-threatening emergency, always call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.
- You should get your biopsy results 3 to 5 business days (Monday through

Friday) after your procedure.

Taking medicine

- If you have pain after your biopsy, you can take acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Take it the way your healthcare provider tells you to.
- Avoid taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for pain, such as ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) and naproxen (Aleve®). They can cause bleeding.
- You may be taking medicine to thin your blood, such as aspirin or other blood thinners. If there's little or no bruising or bleeding at the biopsy site, you can take it after your procedure. Talk with your healthcare provider if you have any questions.

Contact information

This section will help you know who to contact if you're worried about symptoms or have questions after your biopsy.

If you have a life-threatening emergency, always call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

MSK Breast Nursing Care Team

Call the Breast Nursing Care Team at 646-888-5297, if:

- The breast where you had the biopsy is getting larger.
- You have bleeding or tenderness at the biopsy site that you're worried about.
- You have any questions or concerns about how to care for yourself after your biopsy.

You can reach a member of the Breast Nursing Care Team Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Outside those hours, call the healthcare provider who ordered your biopsy:

- **If this is an MSK breast surgeon:** You may leave a message or follow the prompts to talk with the breast surgical fellow on call.
- **If this is a healthcare provider outside of MSK:** You may leave a message or follow the prompts to talk with the healthcare provider on call.

MSK's After-Hours Telephone Triage call center

The After-Hours Telephone Triage (AHTT) is a call center for MSK patients. Call when you have an urgent medical problem or symptom that needs attention right away.

The AHTT is available 7 days a week when doctors' offices are closed. You can call your primary MSK oncologist's office and follow the prompts to reach the AHTT. You also can call the MSK operator at 212-639-7900.

To learn more, read *About After-Hours Telephone Triage at MSK* (www.mskcc.org/pe/after-hours-triage).

MSK's Urgent Care Center

The Urgent Care Center (UCC) is a special treatment center for MSK patients. Go to the UCC if you have an urgent medical problem that cannot wait until your healthcare provider is available.

The UCC is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's located at MSK's Memorial Hospital in Manhattan.

To learn more, read *About the Urgent Care Center at Memorial Sloan Kettering* (www.mskcc.org/pe/ucc).

MSK's Symptom Care Clinics

MSK's Symptom Care Clinics (SCCs) are special treatment centers for MSK patients.

If you're having a medical problem, call your primary MSK oncologist before going to an SCC. They'll ask the SCC staff to call you to schedule an appointment. The appointment is usually on the same day. You must have an appointment to be seen at an SCC.

SCCs are located at regional sites in New Jersey, Westchester County, and on Long Island. See the list below for site addresses.

New Jersey:

- MSK Basking Ridge: 136 Mountainview Blvd., Basking Ridge, NJ 0792
- MSK Bergen: 225 Summit Ave., Montvale, NJ 07645
- MSK Monmouth: 480 Red Hill Rd., Middletown Township, NJ 07748

Westchester:

- MSK Westchester: 500 Westchester Ave., West Harrison, NY 10604

Long Island:

- MSK Commack: 650 Commack Rd., Commack, NY 11725
- MSK Nassau: 1101 Hempstead Tpke., Uniondale, NY 11553

MSK biopsy sites

If you have any questions about your biopsy, call the site where you had the biopsy. See the list below for site numbers. You can talk with a radiologist or breast imaging specialist during normal business hours.

Manhattan:

- MSK Evelyn H. Lauder Breast Center (also called the Breast and Imaging Center): 646-888-5297
- MSK Ralph Lauren Center: 646-608-0108 or 646-608-0152

Long Island:

- MSK Commack: 631-212-6173 or 631-212-4306
- MSK Nassau: 516-559-1133 or 516-559-1137

Westchester:

- MSK Westchester: 914-367-7069 or 914-367-7534

New Jersey:

- MSK Basking Ridge: 908-542-3407 or 908-542-3002
- MSK Bergen: 201-775-7144
- MSK Monmouth: 848-225-6035 or 848-225-6037

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Caring for Yourself After Your Image-Guided Breast Biopsy - Last updated on March 9, 2026
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center