



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

MRI-Guided Breast Biopsy

This information will help you get ready for your magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) guided biopsy of your breast.

About Your Breast Biopsy

Your radiologist (doctor who specializes in image-guided procedures) has recommended that you have an MRI-guided breast biopsy. A breast biopsy is done to take samples of tissue from your breast to examine it for cancer.

You will first have an MRI done to find the exact area of your breast to biopsy. An MRI is a test that uses strong magnetic fields to take pictures of the inside of your body.

Once the area to biopsy is found, your radiologist will guide a thin needle into your breast. They will remove a sample of tissue or cells. The sample is then checked for cancer. After your biopsy, you will have a mammogram.

If you have any of the devices listed below, call 646-227-2323. It may not be safe for you to have an MRI.

- Pacemaker
- Automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (AICD)
- Breast tissue expander
- Aneurysm clip



If an MRI is not safe for you, your doctor will order a different test. If you have any other questions about your MRI, call your doctor's office.

Before Your Procedure

Preparing for your MRI

- If you have a medical implant or device, ask the doctor who put it in for the exact name and manufacturer. If you don't have this information before your MRI, you may not be able to have it that day.
- During your MRI you will lie face down on your stomach with your hands above your head for about 1 hour. Your breasts will fit into cushioned holes in the table. If you think you will be uncomfortable lying still or if you're afraid of being in a narrow or small space, talk with your doctor or nurse ahead of time. They may prescribe medication to help you feel more comfortable.
- If you wear a medication patch on your skin, you may need to remove it before your MRI. This is because metal in the patch may heat up during your MRI and cause burns. Make sure you have an extra medication patch with you to apply after your MRI.

Practice relaxation exercises

The MRI machine makes loud noises during the scan. This video shows relaxation exercises you can practice before your MRI. You can do these exercises during your scan to feel more comfortable.



Please visit www.mskcc.org/pe/relaxation_mri to watch this video.

Injections before your MRI

Contrast dye

Contrast is a special dye that makes it easier for your doctor to see differences in your body. Your nurse or radiologist will insert an intravenous (IV) line in your arm to give you your IV contrast.

If you've had a reaction to contrast in the past, tell your doctor or nurse.

Breastfeeding

Your doctor or nurse will ask you if you're pregnant or think you might become pregnant.

It's safe to receive contrast while breastfeeding. Some people choose not to breastfeed for 24 hours after receiving MRI contrast. If you're breastfeeding, talk to your doctor about your options.

The Day of Your Procedure

Things to remember

- Check your printed reminder for the time and location of your MRI. Please arrive 1 hour before your appointment time.
- If you wear a medication patch on your skin, bring an extra one with you.
- If your doctor prescribed medication to help you relax, take it 30 to 60 minutes before your MRI.

What to expect

When you arrive

You will change into a hospital gown before going into the scanning area. For safety reasons, you will place your clothing, credit cards, and any objects (such as your phone, jewelry, coins, and glasses) in a locker. This is because objects with even a small amount of metal can fly into the magnet. The magnet can also damage cell phones and credit cards.

Your technologist will bring you to the scanning room and help you onto the MRI table. The MRI machine is a large, donut-shaped magnet. It makes a loud tapping noise during the scan. Your technologist will offer you earplugs or earphones to listen to music. You will lie facedown on your stomach with your hands above your head.

During your procedure

Once you're comfortable on the MRI table, your technologist will slide it into the magnetic part of the machine and begin the scan. You will be able to speak with your technologist during the entire scan.

It's important to lie still and breathe normally. You may want to do your relaxation exercises during your scan.

Your breast(s) will be pressed down in order to take pictures. The pictures will help your radiologist find the area they need to biopsy.

The table will be pulled out from the MRI machine. You will be taken in and out of the MRI machine during this procedure. Once they find the area of your breast to be biopsied, your radiologist will give you an injection (shot) of a local anesthetic (medication to make an area numb) into your breast.

After the area is numb, your radiologist will make a small incision (surgical cut) in your breast and insert a thin needle. They will remove samples of tissue or cells. The sample will be sent to the Pathology Department to check it for cancer cells.

Your radiologist will leave a small marker at the area of your incision to help your doctor identify the biopsied area. You won't be able to feel this marker. Your radiologist will then put Steri-Strips™ (thin pieces of paper tape) over your incision.

Your procedure will take 30 to 60 minutes.

After Your Procedure

- After your procedure, you will have your post-biopsy mammogram. After your mammogram, your technologist will place a bandage over your Steri-Strips.
- Your nurse will give you the resource *Caring for Yourself After Your Image-Guided Breast Biopsy* (www.mskcc.org/pe/after_image_guided_breast_biopsy) for instructions on how to care for your biopsy site.
- Your radiologist will call you with your biopsy results in 3 to 5 working days. They will also send a report to your doctor. Your doctor will use the results of your biopsy to help plan your care.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Interventional Radiology at 212-639-2236. You can reach a staff member Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, please call 212-639-2000 and ask for the fellow on call for Interventional Radiology.

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

MRI-Guided Breast Biopsy - Last updated on October 15, 2018

©2019 Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center