Percutaneous Needle Biopsy

This information will help you get ready for your percutaneous (pur-kyoo-tay-nee-uh) needle biopsy procedure at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

About Your Percutaneous Needle Biopsy

During your percutaneous needle biopsy, your interventional radiologist will insert a needle through your skin to collect a sample of tissue. An interventional radiologist is a doctor who specializes in image-guided procedures. They may use computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), ultrasound, or fluoroscopy (realtime x-rays) to find the area to biopsy. The sample is sent to the laboratory for testing and evaluation.

The procedure usually takes less than 1 hour. Your interventional radiologist will explain the procedure to you and give you time to ask any questions before you sign a consent form.

Before Your Procedure

Ask about your medications
You may need to stop taking some of your medications before your procedure. Talk with your doctor about which
medications are safe for you to stop taking. We have included some common examples below.

**Anticoagulants (blood thinners)**
If you take a blood thinner (medication that affects the way your blood clots), ask the doctor performing your procedure what to do. Their contact information is listed at the end of this resource. Whether they recommend you stop taking the medication depends on the reason you’re taking it.

**Do not stop taking your blood thinner medication without talking with your doctor.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Blood Thinners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>apixaban (Eliquis®)</td>
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<tr>
<td>aspirin</td>
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<tr>
<td>celecoxib (Celebrex®)</td>
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<td>cilostazol (Pletal®)</td>
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<td>clopidogrel (Plavix®)</td>
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<td>dabigatran (Pradaxa®)</td>
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Please read our resource *Common Medications Containing Aspirin and Other Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)* ([www.mskcc.org/pe/common_meds](http://www.mskcc.org/pe/common_meds)). It has important information about medications you’ll need to avoid before your procedure and what medications you can take instead.

**Medications for diabetes**
If you take insulin or other medications for diabetes, ask the doctor who prescribes the medication what you should do the morning of your procedure. You may need to change the dose before your procedure.

**Diuretics (water pills)**
If you take any diuretics (medications that make you urinate more often), ask the doctor performing your procedure what to do. You may need to stop taking them the day of your procedure. Diuretics are sometimes called water pills. Some examples are furosemide (Lasix®) and hydrochlorothiazide.

**Arrange for someone to take you home**
You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. Make sure to plan this before the day of your procedure.

If you don’t have someone to take you home, call one of the agencies below. They will send someone to go home with you. There’s usually a charge for this service, and you will need to provide transportation.
Tell us if you’re sick

If you get sick (such as have a fever, cold, sore throat, or flu) before your procedure, call a nurse in Interventional Radiology at 212-639-2236. A nurse is available Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, call 212-639-2000 and ask for the Interventional Radiology fellow on call.

Note the time of your appointment

A staff member from Interventional Radiology will call you 2 business days before your procedure. If your procedure is scheduled on a Monday, you will be called on the Thursday before.

The staff member will tell you what time you should arrive at the hospital for your procedure. They will also tell you where to go for your procedure. If you don’t receive a call by noon the business day before your procedure, please call 212-639-5051.

If you need to cancel your procedure for any reason, call the doctor who scheduled it for you.

Your procedure will take place at 1 of the following locations:
- **Memorial Hospital (MSK’s main hospital)**
  1275 York Avenue (between East 67th and East 68th Streets)
  New York, NY 10065
  Take the M elevator to the 2nd Floor.

- **MSK Commack**
  650 Commack Road
  Commack, NY 11725

- **MSK Westchester**
  500 Westchester Avenue
  West Harrison, NY 10604

- **MSK Monmouth**
  480 Red Hill Road
  Middletown, NJ 07748
Instructions for eating and drinking before your procedure

- Do not eat anything after midnight the night before your procedure. This includes hard candy and gum.

- Between midnight and up until 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time, you may drink a total of 12 ounces of water (see figure).

- Starting 2 hours before your scheduled arrival time, do not eat or drink anything. This includes water.

The Day of Your Procedure

Things to remember

- Take your medications the morning of your procedure as instructed by your doctor. Take them with a few sips of water.

- Don’t put on any cream or petroleum jelly (Vaseline®). You can use deodorant and light moisturizers.

- Don’t wear eye makeup.

- Remove any jewelry, including body piercings.

- Leave all valuables, such as credit cards and jewelry, at home.
If you wear contact lenses, wear your glasses instead, if possible. If you don’t have glasses, bring a case for your contacts.

What to bring with you

- A list of the medications you take at home
- Medications for breathing problems (such as inhalers), medications for chest pain, or both
- A case for your glasses or contacts
- Your Health Care Proxy form, if you have completed one
- If you use a CPAP or BiPAP machine to sleep at night, please bring your machine with you, if possible. If you can’t bring your machine with you, we will give you one to use while you are in the hospital.

What to expect

Once you arrive at the hospital, doctors, nurses, and other staff members will ask you to state and spell your name and date of birth many times. This is for your safety. People with the same or similar names may be having procedures on the same day.

Your nurse will put in an intravenous (IV) line in your hand or arm. You will be brought into the procedure room. You will receive medication through your IV to make you feel drowsy.

Your skin around the biopsy area will be cleaned and covered with a drape. You will get an injection (shot) to numb the site.
Your interventional radiologist will insert the biopsy needle and check its position with MRI, CT, ultrasound, or fluoroscopy. When the needle is in the right place, your radiologist will take the biopsy. The sample will be checked to make sure there is enough tissue. If there is enough, your interventional radiologist will remove the needle. If there isn’t enough, they will take another sample.

When the procedure is finished, the site will be cleaned and covered with a bandage.

**After Your Procedure**

**In the recovery room**
You will be taken to the recovery room, where you will stay for up to 3 hours. Tell your nurse if you:

- Have increasing pain or discomfort
- Feel lightheaded or dizzy
- Have any shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Have any symptoms that concern you

**At home**

- You may resume your normal diet right away.
- You may shower the day after your procedure. Remove the bandage before you shower. Replace it with an adhesive bandage (Band-Aid®) after your shower.
- Don’t take a tub bath or submerge the biopsy area in water
for 24 hours after your procedure.

- You may resume your normal activities the day after the procedure.

**Call Your Interventional Radiology Doctor or Nurse if You Have:**

- Increased pain at the site of the biopsy
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Any other symptom(s) that concerns you

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns, 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](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.