



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Stereotactic Core Breast Biopsy

This information will help you prepare for your stereotactic core breast biopsy.

## About Your Breast Biopsy

Your radiologist (a doctor specializing in image interpretation and image guided procedures) has recommended that you have a stereotactic core breast biopsy. A breast biopsy is done to take samples of tissue from your breast to examine it for cancer.

You will first have a mammogram done to find the exact area of your breast to biopsy.

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.

## Before Your Procedure

### Ask about your medications

You may need to stop taking some of your medication before your procedure. We have included some common examples below.

- Stop taking NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen (Advil<sup>®</sup>, Motrin<sup>®</sup>) and naproxen (Aleve<sup>®</sup>), 24 hours before your procedure or as directed by your doctor.
- If you take medication to thin your blood, ask the doctor who prescribes it for you what to do. Some examples are aspirin, heparin, warfarin (Coumadin<sup>®</sup>), clopidogrel (Plavix<sup>®</sup>), enoxaparin (Lovenox<sup>®</sup>), dabigatran (Pradaxa<sup>®</sup>), apixaban (Eliquis<sup>®</sup>), and rivaroxaban (Xarelto<sup>®</sup>). There are others, so be sure your doctor knows all the medications you're taking.
- If your doctor tells you to stop taking aspirin, stop taking it 5 days before your procedure or as directed by your doctor. If you take aspirin because you've had a problem with your heart or you've had a stroke, be sure to talk with your doctor before you stop taking it.
  - If you take low dose aspirin (81 mg), you may not need to stop it before your procedure. Your doctor will tell you if you should stop taking low dose aspirin.

## The Day of Your Procedure

### Things to remember

- You may eat as usual the day of your procedure.
- You may shower the day of your procedure.
- Don't put on any lotion, powder, or deodorant.
- Wear a button-down or loose-fitting shirt.
- For women, bring a tight-fitting bra to wear after your biopsy to support the biopsy site on your breast and make you more comfortable.

### 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.

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown and remove any necklaces, chains, and earrings you're wearing.

Your technologist will bring you to the procedure room. You will either lie on your stomach on the examination table, or sit up in a chair.

Once you're comfortable, your technologist will begin your procedure. Your breast(s) will go inside the mammogram machine and will be pressed down in order to take pictures. The pictures will help your radiologist find the area they need to biopsy.

It's important to stay still and breathe normally during the procedure.

Once they find the area of your breast to biopsy, your radiologist will clean your skin and give you an injection (shot) of a local anesthetic (medication to make an area numb).

After the area is numb, your radiologist will make a small incision (surgical cut) in your breast and insert a thin needle. They will leave the needle in place while more images are taken. This is to be sure the needle is in the correct spot. Your radiologist will remove samples of tissue. The samples will be sent to the Pathology Department to see if they contain cancer.

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

## After Your Procedure

- When your biopsy is finished, your radiologist will place Steri-Strips™ (thin pieces of paper tape) over your incision and you will be helped off the table.
- After your procedure, you will have your post-biopsy mammogram to make sure the marker is in the right place. After your mammogram, your technologist will place a bandage over the Steri-Strips.
- Your nurse will give you the resource [\*Caring of Yourself After Your 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.

If you have questions after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000 and ask for the Radiology Body fellow on call.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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