Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Stereotactic Core Breast Biopsy

This information explains what to expect during your stereotactic (STAYR-ee-oh-TAK-tik) core breast biopsy.

About your breast biopsy

A breast biopsy is a procedure that takes tissue samples from your breast to check for cancer.

First, you will have a mammogram to find the exact area of your breast to biopsy. A mammogram is an imaging test that takes X-ray pictures of your breast.

Then, a radiologist will look at these pictures to find the area to biopsy. A radiologist is a doctor with special training in doing image-guided procedures.

Once your radiologist finds the area to biopsy, they will guide a thin needle into your breast. They will use the needle to take out tissue samples. The samples are then sent to a lab and checked for cancer.

Before your breast biopsy

You may wear certain devices on your skin that can disturb the imaging process. Before your procedure, tell the person doing your mammogram if you wear:

- A continuous glucose monitor (CGM).
- An insulin pump.

The day of your breast biopsy

Things to remember

- You can eat and drink like you normally do on the day of your procedure.
- You can shower the day of your procedure.
- Do not put on any lotion, cream, powder, perfume, cologne, or deodorant.
- Wear a button-down or loose-fitting top.
- If you wear a bra, bring a tight-fitting bra to wear after your biopsy. This will support the biopsy site on your breast and make you more comfortable.

What to expect

Once you arrive at the hospital, many staff members will ask you to say and spell your name and birth date. This is for your safety. People with the same or a similar name may be having procedures on the same day.

You may be asked to change into a hospital gown and take off any jewelry you're wearing.

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

Once you're comfortable, your technologist will start the procedure. Your breast will go inside the mammogram machine and be pressed down 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 your radiologist finds the area of your breast to biopsy, they will clean your skin. Then, they will give you an injection (shot) of a local anesthetic. A local anesthetic is medicine that numbs an area of your body.

After the area is numb, your radiologist will make a small incision (surgical cut) in your breast. Then, they will put a thin needle into the incision. They will leave the needle in place while they take more pictures. This is to make sure the needle is in the right spot.

Once the needle is in the right spot, your radiologist will use it to take out tissue samples. The samples will be sent to the pathology department and checked for cancer.

Your radiologist will leave a small marker at the area of your incision. The marker will help your doctor see where you had your biopsy. You will not be able to feel this marker. Your radiologist will then put Steri-Strips™ (thin pieces of surgical tape) over your incision.

Your procedure will take about 1 hour.

After your breast biopsy

- Right after your procedure, you will have another 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 technologist or nurse will give you the resource *Caring for Yourself After Your Image-Guided Breast Biopsy* (www.mskcc.org/pe/after_image_guided_breast_biopsy). It has instructions on how to care for your biopsy site.
- Your radiologist will call you with your biopsy results in 3 to 5 business days (Monday through Friday). 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 an MSK MyChart account, you will be able to see your results as soon as they're available. You may see them before your radiologist does. While some results are easy to understand, others may be confusing or worrying. You can choose to look at your results, but we recommend waiting until you talk with your radiologist. They can explain what your results mean.

If you have questions or concerns after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000. Ask for the Radiology Body fellow on call.

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

Stereotactic Core Breast Biopsy - Last updated on May 21, 2024
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center