



Preparing For Your Breast Biopsy Procedure

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It is normal for biopsy procedures to create anxiety for yourself and family members. This guide is created to help prepare you and your family for discussions about a breast biopsy. During this stressful time your physician might suggest recording or taking notes during the conversation(s).

Most breast biopsies are recommended when:

- You or your doctor feels a lump or thickening in your breast, and your doctor suspects breast cancer
- A suspicious area is present in your mammogram
- An ultrasound scan reveals a suspicious finding
- Your breast MRI reveals an abnormal finding
- You have unusual nipple changes, including crusting, scaling, dimpling skin or bloody discharge

We encourage you to review this checklist of items you should discuss with your doctor prior to having a breast biopsy. You may have already covered many of these, if not, it's never too late to ask more questions to ensure you are comfortable with your upcoming surgery.

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Your overall health

Age, diet, genetics and your medical history play an important part in your breast health. It is very important to inform your physician(s) of your full medical history including all medications you are taking. It is a good practice to make a complete list of both prescription and over the counter medicines that you take. And always discuss any known allergies you might have to medications, latex or other materials before any procedure.

Before the biopsy

Be sure to understand all of the breast biopsy options and talk with your physician to determine which one is best for you, as well as the risks and benefits associated with each procedure. Several different options are used to obtain the tissue samples from the breast, most biopsies are MRI or Ultrasound-guided.

- Fine-needle aspiration biopsy
- Core needle biopsy
- Vacuum-assisted core biopsy
- Stereotactic biopsy
- Surgical (open) biopsy

Your physician may recommend a particular procedure based on the size, location and other characteristics of the breast abnormality. If you are confused on why you're having one type of biopsy instead of another, ask your doctor to explain.

Questions to ask:

- Will I have to stop taking ALL of my medications and how long before the biopsy will I need to stop?
- What kind of medicines or procedures will I need before the breast biopsy?
- How much tissue will you remove from my breast?
- How should I dress the day of the procedure?
- Will I be awake? and how long will it take?
- Do I need someone to drive me home?



After the biopsy procedure

Your medical team will cover all of the basic post-biopsy care procedures, each type of biopsy will be different. With most breast biopsy types (except an open surgical biopsy) you will have bandages and an ice pack over the biopsy site to reduce swelling. Bruising around the site is common after some needle biopsy procedures and if you have a surgical biopsy, you will likely have stitches (sutures) to care for.

Questions to ask:

- Will I need any medication after the biopsy?
- Are there possible side effects from having a biopsy?
- Do I have a safe marker or clip in my breast at the biopsy site?
- Will I need to avoid any activities?
- Do you recommend a special diet?

Regarding the results

Waiting for your test results can be the most stressful time of your procedure. Focus on what is best for you, your family and friends.

Questions to ask:

- How soon will I know the biopsy results?
- Will you or someone else explain the radiology/pathology report to me?
- How can I be certain the biopsy results definitely belong to me?

If my biopsy is benign (negative for cancer):

- What kind of follow-up do I need?
- When should I have my next screening?

If my biopsy is malignant (positive for cancer):

- What are my options for treatment?
- When do I start my personal treatment plan?
- Can you tell me about local support groups for breast cancer patients and families?

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