

Breast Biopsy

A biopsy is the removal of pieces of tissue, which are then sent to a lab for testing. A breast biopsy may be needed when other tests show something in the breast that needs to be checked more closely. If a lump is present, it may be removed at the same time as the biopsy. Lymph nodes around the area may also be checked. Your doctor will review the results of your biopsy with you at your next visit and talk to you about treatment if needed.

There are different types of breast biopsies. Your doctor has ordered a:

- Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA)
- Core Needle Biopsy
- Stereotactic Biopsy
- Open Excisional Biopsy

To Prepare

- You may be told to not eat food after midnight before the test.
- A family member or friend may need to take you home after your biopsy.

During the Test

- You will be asked to take your clothing off above the waist and put on a hospital gown.
- An IV (intravenous) may be put into a vein in your arm to give medicine.
- You lie on a table.
- The biopsy site is cleaned.
- The doctor numbs the site. This may sting for a few seconds. After this, you should only feel pressure and no pain.
- A mammogram or an ultrasound may be done to locate the site to be tested.

Types of Breast Biopsies

Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA)

This biopsy is often done in the doctor's office for lumps that can be felt.

- The doctor inserts a small needle that is attached to a syringe into the lump.
- The needle may be moved around. Tissue and fluid is collected in the syringe.
- The needle is then removed.

Core Needle Biopsy

This biopsy is done with a larger needle.

- A small cut is made in the skin.
- The needle is put into the site.
- Several samples of tissue are collected.
- The needle is then removed.

Stereotactic Biopsy

This biopsy is done for areas that cannot be felt, but are seen on mammogram.

- You lie face down on a table with an opening for the breast.
- The site is numbed.
- A small incision is made in the breast.
- The breast is squeezed flat and a special type of x-ray is done before and during the biopsy to locate the site.
- A needle is put into the breast to remove samples of tissue.
- Several samples of tissue are collected.
- The needle is then removed.

Open Excisional Biopsy

The entire lump is taken out in surgery.

- You will be given medicine to numb the breast or to make you sleepy.
- An incision is made in the breast to remove the lump and some tissue around the lump.
- The site is closed with a stitch or special tape.

Home Care

- Do not lift over 5 pounds for 24 hours after your biopsy. A gallon of milk weighs over eight pounds.
- You can eat your normal diet.
- You may have bruising, discomfort, swelling and a small amount of drainage at the biopsy site.
- You can wear a sports bra for support.
- You may use over the counter pain medicine that does not contain aspirin as needed.
- Apply an ice pack to your breast as needed to reduce swelling and bruising. Do not apply ice directly to the skin.
- A stitch or special tape is put on the incision. The stitch will be removed at the doctor's office.
- If you had an open excisional biopsy, you may shower but do not take a bath or swim for 2 weeks.

Call your doctor if you have:

- Bleeding from the biopsy site
- Increased swelling, redness, warmth or drainage at the biopsy site
- Pain not relieved by medicine

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.