

BREAST NEEDLE BIOPSY



Weill Cornell Imaging
New York-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medicine

PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE

Your doctor has determined that a biopsy of the breast or axilla is needed for diagnosis and to guide treatment, if necessary. A biopsy is a diagnostic test of the tissue (and sometimes fluid) from a suspicious area in your breast or axilla. After tissue samples are taken, a pathologist will examine the cells under a microscope and determine what they are. A biopsy is the best way to confirm breast cancer. You may have questions about what will happen during the procedure and how best to prepare.

Before the biopsy, you will be asked to remove your clothes above the waist and be given a gown to wear. The doctor or nurse will then help you get comfortable on the exam table. You may be lying down or sitting up depending on the type of biopsy. The area in your breast or axilla to be biopsied will be targeted by ultrasound, mammography, or MRI.

After your skin is cleansed, the doctor will give you an injection of local anesthetic. If you are having a core needle biopsy, once the area is numb the doctor may make a small cut or “incision” in your skin and guide a needle to the area that needs to be biopsied. This needle will be used to take tissue samples or “cores”. The number of cores taken is variable and will depend on each lesion. You may feel some pressure on your breast while this is done.

The doctor will then place a small tissue marker at the biopsy site. The marker is tiny, approximately the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen. You will not feel the marker after it is placed. The marker will show the area that was biopsied when you have breast imaging in the future and guide surgery, should it be necessary.

After the needle is removed, the incision is cleansed and bandaged. The incision is small enough that you won’t need stitches. Typically, a post-procedure mammogram of your breast may be taken to document the area of biopsy. The entire procedure will take approximately 1 hour.

Complications of the procedure are rare, and the risks are very low. Associated risks include, but are not limited to, bruising of the breast, bleeding at the biopsy site, infection, and allergic reaction. A non-diagnostic result may require a repeat biopsy on another day. Additional surgery or other treatment may be recommended depending on the biopsy results.

LET OUR OFFICE KNOW IF:

- You are sensitive or have an allergy to local anesthetics such as lidocaine, tape or adhesives, or surgical cleaning solution.

ON THE DAY OF YOUR BIOPSY:

You don’t need to prepare for a biopsy. You will be awake during the procedure and only local anesthesia will be used to numb the area. Be sure to follow your regular diet and continue to take your regular medications as prescribed. Please also consider the following:

- Wear a loose, comfortable, two-piece outfit.
- Bring a comfortable, supportive bra, like a sports bra, for after the procedure.
- If you take any anti-anxiety medication prior to your biopsy you must not drive for 12 hours subsequently.

AFTER BIOPSY CARE

Most women have little or no pain during the biopsy and no scarring afterwards. It is normal to experience mild discomfort at the biopsy site with some bruising and swelling for a few days. To reduce the risk of bleeding, bruising, and infection:

- Keep the biopsy site clean and dry.
- Do not take a shower 24 hours afterward. Avoid taking a bath, sitting in a hot tub or swimming for 7 days.
- Apply ice packs over the dressing for 30-minute intervals for the first 24 hours.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) may be used for pain as directed by the manufacturer if not contraindicated given any of your underlying health conditions.
- Limit strenuous exercise and heavy lifting for 2-3 days.
- The small incision will be covered by white Steri-Strips and a gauze pad. After 24 hours, remove the gauze pad to expose the Steri-Strips. At this time, you may get these wet with soap and water. Allow them to fall off by themselves; if these have not fallen off on their own by day 4-7, you can remove them yourself.
- If re-bleeding occurs, hold pressure over the biopsy site with the full width of your flattened hand for 10 minutes.

— WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

Some insurance providers require a pre-authorization for biopsy procedures. In most cases, this is obtained by your referring physician's office.

At Weill Cornell Medicine, we understand having a breast biopsy can be stressful. Knowing what to expect and how to best prepare can help. Remember that you can always call us and speak to our team of imaging specialists if you have any questions or concerns at 212-746-6000.

IF YOU DEVELOP A PROBLEM:

- Contact your doctor if you experience fever, chills, redness, swelling, bleeding, unusual drainage, or increased pain from the biopsy site.
- An imaging team member can be reached at 212-746-6000 during business hours Monday-Friday 8am-5pm. After hours, please call 212-746-2630.

BIOPSY RESULTS:

- You can expect to get your results within 3-5 business days, but sometimes it can take up to 2 weeks. Longer waiting times have no bearing on the nature of the results.
- Biopsy results are immediately released to patients through Connect.
- The doctor or nurse will be in touch with you regarding the biopsy results and follow-up recommendations. If you do not receive a call, please call us for assistance.

 Scan the QR code to view our Breast Biopsy video



Weill Cornell Imaging