

## Breast Biopsy

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### What is a breast biopsy?

A breast biopsy removes all or part of a breast lump. Your surgeon decides how much of the lump needs to be removed for testing. The breast tissue is tested to see if any cancer cells are present.

A breast biopsy is the only way to know for sure if the lump is benign (not cancer) or malignant (cancer).

### What happens during a breast biopsy?

You may have either a local or general anaesthetic or needle localization.

**With a local anaesthetic**, the area around the breast lump is numbed or 'frozen'. You are awake during the biopsy. You do not feel pain, but you may feel pressure and movement.

**With a general anesthetic**, you are asleep during the biopsy. The biopsy takes about 30 minutes. You may have stitches in the incision.

**With a needle localization**, a needle is inserted into the lump or area of concern. This is done in the Diagnostic Imaging Department. The skin around the lump is numbed or 'frozen' before the needle is put in. Using x-rays, the Radiologist places a small needle into the breast and secures it into the area of concern. A cover is placed over the needle and it stays in place until you go for surgery. The surgeon then operates and takes out the area around the end of the needle as directed by the Radiologist.

### How will I feel after a biopsy?

You may have some discomfort or pain from the incision. If you had a general anesthetic, you may feel sick to your stomach. If you have pain, discomfort or nausea, tell your nurse. Your nurse can give you medications that will help. After the biopsy your surgeon will talk to you. He or she will tell you the results of the biopsy if available. It may take 7 to 14 days to get the results.

**Please turn over →**

### **When can I go home after a breast biopsy?**

You will go home 2 to 3 hours after the biopsy. You need to have a family member or friend take you home if you had general anesthetic.

### **What can I do after a breast biopsy?**

#### **Activity**

You can return to your usual activities as soon as you feel able.

#### **Incision Care**

You will have a small bandage covering the incision. Keep your incision clean and dry. You may shower the day after your biopsy. Try not to get your incision too wet. Pat your incision dry after a shower. If you have a bandage on, change it after each shower.

The incision takes about 1 week to heal. You may see some bruising around the incision, which is normal.

### **When should I see the surgeon again?**

Make sure you have a follow-up appointment with your surgeon 1 to 2 weeks after your breast biopsy. Your surgeon will check your breast and incision at this time. If you have stitches, they will be removed. You and your surgeon will talk about further follow-up after your biopsy at this appointment.

#### **Call your surgeon if you notice:**

- You have pain or discomfort that gets worse.
- You have a lot of yellow or bloody drainage from the incision.
- You have a fever greater than 38°C or 100°F.
- You have a lot of swelling around the incision.