

Stereotactic Breast Core Biopsy

Your physician has recommended that you undergo a stereotactic breast core biopsy.

Understandably, you have questions regarding this procedure. This FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) card will help you understand why the procedure is necessary and what to expect.

Why do I need a stereotactic core biopsy?

Probably by now, your doctor has explained to you that your mammogram has revealed an abnormality in your breast. In the past, these abnormalities or lesions were treated in one of two ways. Either they were “followed” over a period of time by the physician to see if there was a significant change, or the patient had surgery to remove the lesion completely (surgical excisional biopsy). More recently, stereotactic core biopsy, has been developed and many (but not all) lesions are able to be biopsied using this new method. Physicians agree that the stereotactic core biopsy is a less painful, less invasive way to obtain the tissue sample needed for diagnosis. This procedure requires much less recovery time than does an excisional biopsy and there is no significant scarring to the breast.

How do I prepare for the biopsy?

Do not wear perfume, oil, lotion, powder, deodorant or antiperspirant on the breast or underarm area. You may eat a light meal before the procedure. If you are taking aspirin or other medication (which may cause poor blood clotting), you will be asked to stop taking this medication for five (5) days before the procedure. Bring a bra with you to wear home to hold pressure at the biopsy site and to hold an icebag in place. The procedure is done at the Breast Imaging Department located on the first floor of Mills Breast Cancer Institute in Urbana.

How is stereotactic core biopsy performed?

The stereotactic core biopsy procedure will be performed by a radiologist with help from a radiologic (x-ray) technologist. Before you arrive, the radiologist will have studied your mammogram to become familiar with the location of the abnormality.

After checking in, you will be asked to change into a gown and escorted to the biopsy room. The technologist will ask you to lie face down on the special biopsy table, making sure you are as comfortable as possible. Your breast will be positioned through a special round opening in the table. The table will then be elevated so the radiologist and technologist can work from below.

The first part of the procedure will seem much like your mammogram, except that you are lying down instead of standing up. Your breast will be compressed with a compression paddle, just as it was during your mammogram. Confirming X-rays will be taken to ensure that the area of the breast containing the lesion is correctly

centered in the paddle window. With the help of a computer, the exact positioning of the biopsy needle is determined from these images.

Next, the physician will numb the biopsy area by injecting a local anesthetic into your breast. This will be done with a very tiny needle and you may feel a slight sting in your breast at the injection site.

After the local anesthetic has taken effect, a small incision is made in the skin and the physician will insert the biopsy needle into your breast. No stitches should be necessary. Once placement is confirmed, the physician will tell you to hold very still while the tissue sample is acquired.

The needle will stay in place while the samples are taken. When the radiologist has retrieved all of the samples, he or she will leave a tiny titanium clip behind in the breast for future evaluation. It is safe for this clip to remain in the breast. The compression paddle will be released from your breast and the technologist will then apply pressure to the biopsy site for 10 minutes to prevent bleeding. You will then be taken for mammogram X-ray images to confirm placement of the titanium clip. Afterward, a dressing will be applied, which you will wear home. You will then be given some post-procedure care instructions.

Will it hurt?

Because the radiologist uses a local anesthetic, there is only a small amount of discomfort during the procedure. However, as individuals, each of us has a slightly different pain threshold. Please inform the radiologist if you experience pain during the procedure.

Will I be able to resume my normal activities right away?

After the technologist has applied a dressing to the biopsy site, you may get dressed. Most women feel fine after the procedure and return to their normal routine right away. However, we recommend that strenuous exercise or activity and heavy lifting greater than 10 pounds be avoided for at least two days. If possible, it's best to go home after the procedure and relax.

What instructions should I follow after the biopsy?

You will be given instructions for biopsy post-procedure care specific to your individual case.

When can I expect the results of my biopsy?

The radiologist performing the biopsy will send the tissue sample to a pathologist who will take a look at it under a microscope. The pathologist will examine the tissue and send a report to the referring physician within two to four working days. Then your physician's office will contact you to discuss your results.

What if I have more questions?

The Carle Breast Imaging staff feels it is very important that all of your questions about stereotactic core biopsy procedure are answered and that you have all the information you need. If you have additional questions or concerns that are not addressed in this pamphlet, please don't hesitate to contact us prior to your biopsy at (217) 383-6098.