

Core Biopsy: Patient Information

What is a Core Biopsy?

A core biopsy of the breast is a special needle biopsy to remove a sample of tissue for examination under the microscope by a pathologist. It is done as an outpatient procedure with local anaesthetic. The procedure will take about 20 minutes. It is important to let us know as soon as possible if you have any blood disorder, or if you are taking:

- Blood thinners: eg ASA, aspirin-containing products, Heparin, Warfarin, Coumadin and Plavix.
- Anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin)
- Vitamin E tablets, Ginko biloba, Garlic tablets, Ginger Root Powder

If any of the above have been prescribed by a physician, that doctor should be consulted before stopping them. Otherwise, these medications and products should be discontinued 5 days before and 2 days after the procedure.

What to Expect During the Core Biopsy

The radiologist will perform the procedure under ultrasound guidance, in order to position the needle as accurately as possible so that the sample obtained will come from the appropriate area. Your skin will be cleansed with antiseptic solution, this will feel cold. Local anaesthetic (freezing) will be injected through a tiny needle, this will sting for 5- 10 seconds. If you have ever had a reaction to freezing from your dentist or any other physician please tell us before the procedure.

Once the freezing has been injected the core biopsy needle will be positioned in the breast. You may feel some pressure at this time. Multiple specimens will be obtained. The exact number is at the discretion of the radiologist. When the special core device takes the sample there is a loud clicking sound. It is important that you do not move during the biopsy procedure.

After the procedure is finished an ice pack will be applied to your breast to decrease the chance of swelling and bruising. Steristrip tapes will cover the biopsy and should be kept dry and be removed in 3-4 days (pat dry following bathing).

Complications of Core Biopsies

Possible complications include:

- bleeding, which would require application of pressure over the area.
- infection: this is very rare. Sterile technique is used to avoid this.
- If the abnormality being biopsied is close to a breast implant there is a possibility of rupture of the implant. If the radiologist thinks that the possibility of rupture is high, alternatives will be discussed.

After the Core Biopsy

The breast may feel sore and bruised. Apply a cold pack or ice for a minimum of four hours, longer if uncomfortable. It should not be applied directly to the skin but rather over the dressing area. After 24 hours a heating pad or a warm water bottle may be used. If you need medication for discomfort take acetaminophen such as Tylenol – no aspirin or Ibuprofen for 24-48 hours.

Notify your doctor if you notice any of the following:

- Increasing pain and/or swelling of the breast
- Increased temperature, pain and redness around the puncture site
- Fever higher than 38 degrees C (100.4 degrees F)
- Uncontrollable bleeding from the biopsy site.

Please note: The core biopsy does not always eliminate the need for open breast surgery. The results of the core biopsy will be sent to your referring doctor approximately one week after your appointment.