

Stereotactic Breast Biopsy

A stereotactic breast biopsy is performed to obtain tissue samples of a breast abnormality. It is performed as an outpatient procedure in the mammography department with a certified mammography technologist and a board-certified Radiologist with specialized training in mammography procedures.

How do I prepare for a Stereotactic Breast Biopsy?

Please dress in comfortable, loose-fitting clothing, with no metallic objects near the breast area. If you wear glasses or hearing aids, they can be temporarily removed during the exam.

There is no need to fast for the biopsy. However, the biopsy will require you to lie on your stomach for a period of time. It is recommended that you do not consume a large meal right before your exam, as lying on a full stomach is uncomfortable.

What is the procedure for a Stereotactic Breast Biopsy?

1. You will be asked to arrive in the mammography department 30 minutes before your procedure. During this time, you will be taken to a private room, where the procedure will be explained to you and any questions will be answered. Afterwards, you will be asked to change into a hospital gown for the procedure. You will not be sedated for this exam, but the radiologist will use a local anesthetic to numb the biopsy site.
2. When ready, you will be taken to the stereotactic procedure room, where you will be asked to lie on your stomach for the duration of the exam.
3. Using a specialized digital mammography machine, the biopsy site is located using your previous mammography films as a guide. This set-up and preparation time will include taking a few mammogram x-rays for comparison with your previous exams.
4. Once the site is identified, the area is cleaned and sterilized. The Radiologist will numb the biopsy site to ensure a painless procedure. A specialized needle will then be inserted to extract tissue samples. These tissue samples are carefully categorized and sent to the laboratory department to be analyzed by a Pathologist (a doctor who specializes in tissue and tissue identification).
5. Once a sufficient amount of tissue is obtained, the radiologist will insert a very small bead into the breast to mark the internal location of the biopsy. ***This is very important***—if for any reason, further tissue needs to be removed, the site is already marked. If the site is not marked, it will not be clear where the biopsy occurred (especially after the site has healed). Most patients will not even feel the bead and it is not magnetic. After the bead has been placed, a post-procedure mammogram will be performed to verify its location.
6. When the procedure is finished, you will be asked to place pressure on the breast to control any bleeding that may occur. The biopsy site will be dressed and take-home instructions will be given and discussed with you.

Aftercare of the biopsy site:

1. An ice pack will be given to you before you leave. Place this ice pack inside your bra, on top of the gauze dressing. Remove and replace it intermittently for 3 hours following your procedure. This will help relieve discomfort and minimize bruising.
2. Remove the gauze dressing the following morning. Do not shower or bathe until you remove the gauze dressing.
3. Leave the steri-strips (applied bandage of thin paper-like strips adhered to your skin) on for the next 4 days. You may bathe carefully with the steri-strip in place, but keep it clean in dry. Do not loosen the steri-strips.

4. You will see bruising in the area of the biopsy. This should resolve in 5-7 days.
5. You may use Tylenol every 6 hours for discomfort as needed. Do not take aspirin or ibuprofen for the next 5 days without consulting your doctor first.
6. Do not participate in any strenuous activity (tennis, aerobic exercise, etc.) for the next 24 hours. After this time, you may resume your regular work/activity schedule.
7. Monitor the site for signs of infection (redness, warmth, excessive pain, drainage from the incision). If you suspect infection, contact your physician immediately.

Results:

A Pathologist will perform the analysis of your tissue samples. If you have questions about your results, please contact your physician. Results are usually available in 3-5 business days.