

About Breast Biopsy

When a lump is felt in the breast or an abnormal area is found on a mammogram, a biopsy may be recommended. Follow-up tests, such as a diagnostic mammogram or ultrasound imaging, can provide more information. However, to make a definite diagnosis of breast cancer, cells or tissue must be removed from the abnormal area of the breast. They are then examined under the microscope. The procedure that removes the cells or tissue is called a biopsy.

Answers to the following questions will help you understand the procedures involved.

Q: Where will the biopsy take place?

A:

Q: What type of biopsy will I have? Why do you recommend this type? Will the entire lump be removed or just part of it?

A:

Q: Can the lump be aspirated (fluid or cells removed with a needle) with a needle? How reliable is a needle biopsy?

A:

Q: How long will the biopsy or aspiration take?

A:

Q: Can the biopsy be done on an outpatient basis? Will I be awake? What will I feel during the procedure?

A:

Q: What medications should I avoid before the biopsy and for how long? When can I start taking my usual medications?

A:

Q: Will the biopsy leave a scar?

A:

Q: Are there any aftereffects of a biopsy? If so, what are they? What problems should I report (i.e., tenderness, pain, numbness along the scar)?

A:

Q: When will I be able to return to my normal routine (i.e., drive, go back to work, do household chores)?

A:

Q: After the biopsy, how soon will I know the results? Can my tissue be placed in a tissue bank (a place where tissue is protected and stored for future use)?

A:

Q: If cancer is found, who will talk with me about my treatment options? When must I make a decision about my treatment choices?

A:



For more information on breast health or breast cancer, please call our breast care helpline (1-877-465-6636) or visit our website. Susan G. Komen for the Cure does not provide medical advice.

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