



STEREOTACTIC BIOPSY

Why do I need a stereotactic biopsy?

A stereotactic biopsy (also known as vacuum assisted core biopsy) has been recommended to you because the radiologist has detected a suspicious area on your recent mammogram. This change is either in the form of microcalcifications or a small mass. Because this abnormality cannot be felt, the only way to sample the area for a diagnosis is under radiographic guidance.

What preparation is necessary?

You should not take Aspirin, Advil, Motrin, Vitamin E or related products for one week prior to the scheduled procedure as these compounds can increase bleeding. If you take a blood thinner (i.e.: Coumadin, Plavix) for other medical conditions you should speak to your medical doctor about how to handle this. You may have breakfast the morning of the procedure and take all other prescribed medication. It is advised that you do not use deodorant or talc powder the morning of the biopsy.

What does the procedure involve?

The stereotactic biopsy takes place in the Mammography suite. You will be positioned on your stomach on a table that has a hole in it, through which the breast to be biopsied will be placed. Your breast is placed in compression for the duration of the procedure. Once the area in question has been positioned properly by the technician, the radiologist will come in to perform the biopsy.* A small amount of local anesthetic is injected into the breast to numb the area. A small nick is made in the skin to accommodate the needle. Using measurements plotted from the images taken by the technician, the radiologist will insert the needle. Small fragments of tissues (cores) will be removed with the aid of a suction device attached to the needle. The technician will x-ray these tissue samples to confirm that the area of concern has been sampled sufficiently. A few post-biopsy images will be taken to document the location of the biopsy and often a tiny marker will be placed in order to locate the site on future mammograms or if surgery is ultimately needed. Small steri-strips and gauze bandages are applied. The gauze bandages can be removed the next day, the steri-strips in 5 days. Some discomfort & swelling is expected, there may also be some bruising.

Results

Your doctor's office should call you with the results in about 4-5 business days. If the results are completely benign a follow up mammogram of the biopsied breast is recommended in six months. If the results show atypical cells, an open surgical biopsy is recommended to arrive at an exact diagnosis. If the results show a malignancy then you must discuss with your doctor what the definitive surgical/treatment options are for you.

*On rare occasions it may not be technically possible to localize the lesion using this approach and the procedure will need to be cancelled.