

Breast Biopsy

If you have a lump or change in your breast or an abnormal finding on a mammogram, you will have follow-up tests. If cancer can't be ruled out with a diagnostic mammogram, breast ultrasound or breast MRI then you will need a biopsy.

A biopsy removes cells or tissue from the suspicious area of the breast. The cells or tissue are studied under a microscope to see if cancer is present. A biopsy is the only test that can diagnose and confirm breast cancer. There are 2 main types of biopsies: needle and surgical. A core needle biopsy is the standard method used to diagnose breast cancer.

If you need a biopsy, you may feel overwhelmed and unsure of what to ask your doctor. Here are some questions to help start the conversation.

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

A:

Q: Why do you recommend this type of biopsy for me? How accurate is it? Who will do the biopsy?

A:

Q: How long will the biopsy take? Will I be awake? Will I feel anything? Can I go home the same day I have the biopsy?

A:

Q: Should I avoid any medicines before the biopsy? If so, for how long? When can I start taking them again?

A:

Q: Will the biopsy leave a scar?

A:

Q: What are the possible side effects of the biopsy? How long will they last? What problems should I report to you (i.e., tenderness, pain, numbness along the scar)?

A:

Q: When will I be able to resume my normal activities?

A:

Q: After the biopsy, when will I get the results?

A:

Q: What tests will be done on my tumor? How will this help guide my treatment?

A:

Q: Will my tumor be saved? If so, where and can it be accessed again, if needed?

A:

Q: If I have cancer, who will talk with me about my treatment options?

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 does not provide medical advice.

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