

# Biopsy

Image guided needle **Biopsy** is performed to obtain a sample of tissue to look at under the microscope, as well as other tests, such as cultures. A needle is skillfully guided into the target tissue using either ultrasound or computed tomography (CT). This technique is virtually safer than a surgical biopsy, which entails creation of an incision, scar, general anesthesia, disruption of tissue planes and recovery period. Interventional radiologists are specially trained in these techniques and usually outpatients go home the same day, with no adverse complications. Many locations would be virtually impossible or quite difficult to biopsy surgically.

Needle biopsies provide the pathologist with tissue to determine the cause of an abnormality. Large core needle biopsies are often used in breast biopsies. (Approximately 80% of all breast abnormalities turn out not to be cancer!) The large core biopsy uses a special needle to obtain larger samples of tissue. There is also a technique called fine needle aspiration, which is used to withdraw cells from suspected cancers. For further questions on which technique will be used for your biopsy, please refer to your physician.

## **What Should I Expect During the Procedure?**

You will be brought into the procedure room by a nurse, who will help you get comfortable and prepare you for the biopsy. The area where the biopsy will be performed will be cleaned and draped with sterile sheets. Conscious sedation and local anesthesia for pain control is administered for nearly all biopsies.

## **What Should I Expect After the Procedure?**

You will be monitored for a short time and then be discharged. If conscious sedation was used, you will have to be monitored for an hour or so. As the pain medication begins to subside, you may experience a slight soreness.

The results of your biopsy will be available to your referring physician, within a few days after the biopsy. Your referring physician will review the results and follow up with you.

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**Additional references include: Northwestern Radiology, [www.radiology.northwestern.edu](http://www.radiology.northwestern.edu), and MedLine Plus, [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus).**