



WAYNE COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Breast Biopsy

If breast symptoms or the results of an imaging test (such as a mammogram) suggest you might have breast cancer, you may need a breast biopsy. During a biopsy, a doctor removes small pieces of breast tissue from the suspicious area so they can be looked at in the lab to see if they contain cancer cells.

Needing a breast biopsy doesn't necessarily mean you have cancer. Most biopsy results are not cancer, but a biopsy is the only way to find out for sure.

Types of breast biopsies

There are different kinds of breast biopsies. Some are done using a hollow needle, and some use an incision (cut in the skin). The type you have depends on a number of things, like:

How suspicious the breast change looks or feels

How big it is

Where it is in the breast

If there is more than one suspicious area

Your overall health

Your personal preferences

Most of the time, a needle biopsy (rather than a surgical biopsy) can be done. Ask your doctor which type of biopsy you will have and what you can expect during and after the procedure.

Fine needle aspiration (FNA)

For a fine needle aspiration (FNA), a very thin, hollow needle attached to a syringe is used to withdraw (aspirate) a small amount of tissue or fluid from a suspicious area.

Core needle biopsy

A core needle biopsy (CNB) uses a larger hollow needle to sample breast changes felt by the doctor or seen on an ultrasound, mammogram, or MRI. This is often the preferred type of biopsy if breast cancer is suspected.

Surgical (open) biopsy

In rare cases, surgery is needed to remove all or part of the lump for testing. This is called a surgical or open biopsy. Most often, the surgeon removes the entire mass or abnormal area as well as a surrounding margin of normal breast tissue.

Lymph node biopsy

This type of biopsy might be done to check the lymph nodes under the arm for cancer spread. This might be done at the same time as a biopsy of the breast tumor, or when the breast tumor is removed during surgery. Checking the lymph nodes can be done by core needle biopsy, or with a sentinel lymph node biopsy (SLNB) and/or an axillary lymph node dissection.

Regardless of which type of biopsy you have, the biopsy samples will be sent to a lab where a doctor called a pathologist will look at them. It typically will take at least a few days for you to find out the results.

Website Resource:

<https://www.cancer.org/>