

Types of Breast Biopsies

What is a breast biopsy?

- A breast biopsy is a short procedure done by the breast radiologist who uses a small needle to take a very small piece (tissue sample) out of your breast.
- A breast tissue sample is needed to see if the change on your mammogram or ultrasound is concerning.
- The tissue sample is sent to a pathology doctor who looks under a magnifying glass, a microscope, to see if the tissue is normal.
- There are different ways to do a breast biopsy. The type of biopsy recommended for you will depend on what your doctor saw on your pictures.
- A small surgical clip is left at the biopsy site in your breast to mark the area for future pictures or possible surgery.
- You will be awake and able to talk to the team during your biopsy. Numbing medicine is given at the biopsy area to help you feel more comfortable. You can go home after your biopsy.

What are the types of breast biopsies?

Ultrasound

- Ultrasound shows a picture of the inside of the breast with sound waves using a painless hand-held device. Warm gel is used on the skin under the device to make the picture clearer. No radiation is used with ultrasound.
- During ultrasound biopsies, you lie on their back on a clean table. The handheld ultrasound device is used throughout the procedure so that the doctor can see the biopsy area. Your doctor will discuss each step of the biopsy as it is taking place.
- An ultrasound guided biopsy takes 15-30 minutes, but there is time needed to prepare you and the room before the biopsy and for mammogram to check on the biopsy clip and give you aftercare instructions after the biopsy. Plan to be in the department for 90 minutes.

Stereotactic or Tomosynthesis

- Stereotactic pictures are taken using x-rays just like a mammogram, which are used to see small things like calcifications in the breast, or things not seen on ultrasound. A small amount of radiation is used with this method.
- During stereotactic biopsies, you lie on their stomach on a clean table. Your breast will be placed below through a hole in the table. It will then be placed between two plates in compression like a mammogram. These plates help to hold the breast still and make sure the correct area is biopsied. Several pictures will be taken during the procedure to guide the doctor to the biopsy area. Your doctor will discuss each step of the biopsy as it is taking place.
- A stereotactic guided biopsy takes 15-30 minutes, but there is time needed to prepare you and the room before the biopsy and for mammogram to check on the biopsy clip and give you aftercare instructions after the biopsy. Plan to be in the department for 90 minutes.

MRI

- MRI uses radiowaves and magnets to take very detailed pictures of the breast. No radiation is used with this MRI, but contrast is injected through IV catheter (thin plastic tube) is placed into your vein . MRI takes the longest to do because of all the information your doctor needs to see.
- During MRI biopsies you on your stomach on a clean table, which moves slowly in and out of the MRI machine. Your breast will be placed in compression between two plates like a mammogram. These plates help to hold the breast still and make sure the correct area is biopsied.
- Several MRI pictures will be taken during the procedure to ensure the correct area is biopsied. Your doctor will discuss each step of the biopsy as it is taking place.
- A MRI guided biopsy takes 45-60 minutes, but there is time needed to prepare you and the room before the biopsy and for mammogram to check on the biopsy clip and give you aftercare instructions after the biopsy. Plan to be in the department for 2 hours.

Questions?The UNC Mammography Clinic can be reached at (984)-974-8762 if you have any questions.