

Women's Imaging Center

Getting Ready for Your Breast Biopsy

Your doctor has referred you to the Morton Hospital Breast Care center for a breast biopsy or cyst aspiration (removal of a small amount of fluid). Having a breast biopsy or cyst aspiration does not mean you have cancer. In fact, more than 80% of patients who have these procedures do not have cancer. The following information will help you prepare for your exam. If you still have questions after reading this, please call Women's Imaging at (508) 828-7227 for further assistance. Remember - communication is the best way for you to stay informed and stay healthy!

Your Appointment

(508) 828-7227

My appointment is on: _____

ARRIVE AT THIS TIME: _____

I'm going to this location to have my biopsy: _____

Why do I need a biopsy?

Your recent breast (imaging) exams have shown a finding. These findings are usually solid lumps, small calcium deposits or cysts (fluid filled sacs). More than 80% of these turn out to be benign (non-cancerous), but we need to make certain that no malignant (cancerous) tissue is present. That is why biopsies and cyst aspirations are so important.

We use new, minimally invasive tests for safe tissue sampling to determine what the finding in your breast represents. During a biopsy, small hollow needles are used to remove small threads of tissue samples. During a cyst aspiration, the fluid in the sac is drawn out. Afterwards, the material that was removed is sent to the lab and examined under a microscope. A very small inert marker will be placed where the sample was taken. Images are then taken to confirm that the area intended to be biopsied was successfully sampled. These procedures are less invasive than surgery and typically cause less pain and scarring, allowing for faster recovery times.

How should I prepare for my biopsy?

First, talk with your doctor about the medications you're taking. Certain medications can interfere with the procedure and must be stopped before your procedure. Please consult your doctor before stopping any of these important medications:

- **Warfarin (Coumadin®)** - **STOP** taking this medication at least **4 DAYS** before your biopsy.
- **Lovenox®** - **STOP** taking this medication at least **12 HOURS** before your biopsy.
- **Plavix®, aspirin, or other blood thinners** - **STOP** taking this medication at least **7 DAYS** before your biopsy.
- **Vitamins, homeopathic remedies, or herbal supplements** - **STOP** taking this medication at least **7 DAYS** before your biopsy.
- **Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs)** - **STOP** taking medications such as Aleve®, Motrin®, Advil®, or Naprosyn® at least **2 DAYS** before your biopsy.

What should I do on the day of my biopsy?

- **PLEASE ARRIVE ON OR BEFORE THE PROCEDURE TIME NOTED ABOVE. DO NOT GO TO THE OUTPATIENT REGISTRATION AREA.**
- While these exams are not usually very painful, we ask that you consider taking the day off from work, and have someone drive you to and from your appointment.
- It's important that you be on time for your appointment. If you are going to be late, please try and call us to let us know.
- It might sound silly, but please do not use powder, anti-perspirant, or deodorant that day.
- If you do not usually wear a bra, we recommend that you wear one on the day of your biopsy.
- Please eat a light meal before your biopsy.

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(page 2)

Will the biopsy hurt?

These procedures are done with the use of reliable medications to numb the area being biopsied. We typically use generous amounts of Novacaine® (xylocaine) and/or Sensorcaine® (bupivacaine) in the skin and surrounding tissues. This usually eliminates the sensation of sharp pain for up to 24 hours, allowing patients to comfortably undergo these sampling procedures. However, even with the use of local anesthetics, you will probably feel some sense of painless pressure as the doctor touches you while taking the tissue samples. Just let us know if you're uncomfortable during the procedure and more numbing medication can be given.

You will not be given a general or intravenous anesthetic (be "knocked out"). We understand the importance patients place on comfort during procedures and have received excellent results with these local anesthetics. If you have a known allergy to either of the medications listed above, let us know!

What else should I know about the procedure?

When we perform the biopsy, we will use an x-ray or ultrasound to help us accurately locate the breast lump and gather the cells we need.

- **Stereotactic (mammogram-assisted) biopsy.**

For this type of biopsy, you will be sitting in a chair, and your breast will be compressed. Then, a mammography machine and special computer will help locate the breast tissue to be biopsied. An IV may be started.

- **Ultrasound-assisted biopsy.** For this type of biopsy, you will be lying down, and a microphone-like instrument called a transducer will be passed over your breast to help locate the breast tissue to be biopsied.

- **Galactograms.** This type of procedure is designed to examine any unusual discharge from the nipple. You will be comfortably seated in the mammography room. The radiologist will insert a very small, thin tube into a breast milk duct in your nipple. A small amount of colorless dye will be injected and then the mammogram will be taken. The dye will help your radiologist learn more about what's happening inside your breast tissue.

Can I go home right away?

Most patients feel fine, are pain-free afterwards, and will be able to return home shortly after the procedure. After the procedure, we will monitor you to make sure everything is OK, and provide you with a light snack. You will not be discharged until you are comfortable and feeling well.

How should I care for myself after the procedure?

The breast care nurse will carefully review how to care for yourself after the exam and will provide you with written instructions that include important contact phone numbers.

Plan ahead and use a common sense approach in the days following the procedure. Strenuous activities and heavy lifting should be avoided during the first day. Expect that you may notice some mild soreness in the biopsy area for the first few days following the procedure. If you are very uncomfortable, we recommend using an ice pack and/or whichever over-the-counter pain medication (aspirin, Tylenol®, Motrin®, Aleve®) usually works best for you. It's important to consider these things before your procedure so you can plan ahead for your care when you return home.

What if I still have questions?

At Morton Hospital, we are committed to providing excellence in patient care and ensuring your good health. The Breast Care Center is staffed by a team of supportive, dedicated caregivers - and our mission is to help you stay healthy. It is very important to us that we answer all your questions about your breast health, and about any of the procedures you undergo here. If you have any additional concerns that are not addressed in this brochure, please don't hesitate to call the Women's Imaging Center at (508) 828-7227.

Morton Hospital

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