

Caring.  
Treating.  
Advancing.

# BREAST BIOPSY

You may have felt a lump in your breast or an abnormality appeared on your mammogram and your physician has ordered a biopsy. You are anxious and frightened. It is only natural to feel this way, but not all lumps and abnormalities are cancer. It could be a benign (non-cancerous) breast condition. Many breast conditions are common, benign in nature, and not life-threatening. A breast biopsy is the way to obtain an accurate and definitive diagnosis on whether a lump is benign or cancerous.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How long does a biopsy take?

The actual biopsy time varies. The total appointment time also may vary, typically taking no longer than 90 minutes from the time you enter the exam room until the time you leave. The actual tissue sampling portion is very quick, and typically takes less than a minute.

### Will I have a scar?

Most women do not experience any permanent scarring.

### Will I experience pain during the procedure?

You might feel a slight tinge or pinch when the numbing medication is administered. Numbing the breast prior to the biopsy creates a pain-free procedure.

### How much of the breast tissue or lump will be removed?

Physicians will remove the smallest amount necessary to perform an accurate biopsy.

### What are the possible side effects?

The breast may be slightly tender and some mild bruising may occur at the biopsy site.



Breast Biopsy Services  
at Penn Highlands Healthcare  
**Imaging Services**

100 Hospital Road, Brookville, PA  
814-849-1880 or 814-849-1870

265 Holiday Inn Road, Clarion, PA  
814-297-8859

809 Turnpike Avenue, Clearfield, PA  
814-768-2276

123 Hospital Avenue, DuBois, PA  
814-375-4061

762 Johnsonburg Road, St. Marys, PA  
814-788-8791

1225 Warm Springs Avenue, Huntingdon, PA  
814-643-8624

1163 Country Club Road, Monongahela, PA  
724-258-1000

239 Colonnade Boulevard, State College, PA  
582-220-2172

187 Hospital Drive, Tyrone, PA  
814-684-6385

[www.phhealthcare.org](http://www.phhealthcare.org)

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*Penn Highlands Healthcare*  
**PATIENT GUIDE**



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## EARLY DETECTION IS KEY

Numerous studies have shown that early detection greatly improves the chances for successful treatment of breast cancer and provides more treatment options. Penn Highlands Healthcare uses the most advanced breast biopsy technologies available to aid in the detection and treatment of breast cancer. These procedures have been designed to make you as comfortable as possible while producing effective clinical results.

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BREAST BIOPSIES?

A breast biopsy is performed to remove cells, usually minimally invasively in the office with a needle biopsy (or, sometimes in the operating room if necessary), to determine if an abnormality is benign or cancerous. Penn Highlands Healthcare offers different types of breast biopsy procedures to obtain tissue samples. The type of biopsy a physician prescribes largely depends on the size, location and other characteristics of the breast abnormality. Each of the breast biopsies below are performed in an outpatient setting.

## MRI-GUIDED BREAST BIOPSY

When an MRI reveals an abnormality, an MRI-guided breast biopsy can help yield a diagnosis. The biopsy is minimally invasive and takes approximately one hour. During the procedure, computer technology guides a needle to the mass. A tissue specimen is removed and sent to the lab where it will go through the testing process and review.

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## STEREOTACTIC BREAST BIOPSY

When an abnormality is found on a mammogram but cannot be felt, the radiologist may suggest a stereotactic core biopsy be performed. A stereotactic biopsy is a minimally invasive way to obtain breast tissue samples. The test uses x-ray equipment and a special computer to analyze pictures of the breast. The computer precisely identifies the abnormal area in which to insert the needle for the removal of a tissue specimen. A stereotactic breast biopsy provides the most accurate results. The procedure requires less recovery time than a surgical biopsy and it leaves no significant scarring to the breast.

## ULTRASOUND-GUIDED BREAST BIOPSY

An ultrasound-guided breast biopsy uses high-frequency sound waves to produce precise images of the abnormality on a computer screen. Once the mass is located, a small incision is made to insert a needle that removes several core samples of tissue to be sent to the lab for analysis.

## BIOPSY MARKERS

Regardless of the type of biopsy performed, the physician will likely insert a small marker device in the breast to mark the biopsy site. The tiny marker cannot be felt and will be present on future mammograms to help view any breast changes.

## HOW TO PREPARE

Before the procedure, you should inform your doctor of any prescription or over-the-counter medications you are taking. Some of

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these medications may need to be stopped several days prior to the biopsy – especially aspirin and blood thinners. Also, avoid the use of deodorant, underarm powders and creams before the procedure because they could interfere with the quality of the images produced. It is advisable to wear loose clothing for comfort. In addition, you may eat a light meal and perform your typical daily activities before arriving for the biopsy.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

On the day of the biopsy, upon arrival you will change into a gown and then be positioned on a specially designed table.

The entire biopsy procedure takes place in six steps that include:

- Cleaning the skin with disinfecting soap.
  - Numbing the breast with medicine.
  - Imaging the breast to identify the biopsy area.
  - Retrieving tissue samples.
    - A small nick in the skin will be made for the insertion of the biopsy instrument. Several samples will be taken to ensure the most accurate diagnosis possible.
    - During a stereotactic or MRI biopsy, the breast will be compressed similar to a mammogram and held in a fixed position to ensure the accuracy of the procedure. X-ray images will be taken and special software will map the exact location from where the tissue samples are to be removed.
  - Taking a final set of images.
  - Placing a small marker to identify the biopsy site.
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When the procedure is completed, sterile gauze and an ice pack will be applied over the incision to minimize swelling and bleeding. A simple pressure bandage and sterile strips will then be placed over the incision.

## AFTER CARE

Most women can resume normal daily activities following the procedure; however, strenuous activity and heavy lifting must be avoided for 24 to 36 hours. Some discomfort and bruising of the area may occur but it typically disappears within four to six weeks. This is a normal part of the healing process. Detailed instructions will be provided and the doctor may prescribe a non-aspirin pain reliever to help with any discomfort.

## OBTAINING THE RESULTS

Waiting for the results may be the most difficult part of the entire biopsy process. It is normal to feel a wide spectrum of emotions during the wait. Due to the time required to generate accurate results in pathology, diagnosis is typically available within 3 to 5 days and sometimes up to 2 weeks for all types of biopsies. A Breast Navigator may follow up with a call or contact your physician to receive the results and any follow up that may be necessary.