

Stereotactic/Tomosynthesis Guided Core Needle Breast Biopsy: What to expect

What is a stereotactic/tomosynthesis guided breast biopsy?

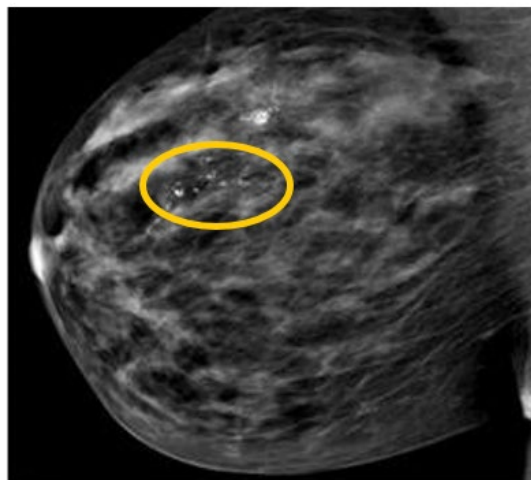
A **core needle biopsy** is a procedure to remove tissue from the breast for examination by a pathologist. **Stereotactic** or **tomosynthesis guided** means that we use x-rays to guide the needle. Radiologists perform this test to take samples of calcifications (and sometimes lumps) in the breast.

A **radiologist** is a doctor who detects disease on medical images and performs tests using medical imaging.

A **pathologist** is a doctor who studies tissue under a microscope to detect disease.

Calcifications are tiny calcium flecks in the breast (figure 1). Most calcifications are benign (not cancer), but some calcifications may be due to early cancer. This test is the least invasive way to sample calcifications. To see calcifications for a biopsy, we compress your breast similar to a mammogram.

Figure 1: Tiny calcifications are on the mammogram shown below (circled in yellow).



What should I expect during the test?

We use x-rays to see the calcifications and a needle to take tissue samples. Then we send the samples to the pathologist to make a diagnosis.

The entire appointment lasts about 2 hours. You will be awake during the test and receive local numbing medicine to prevent pain. You will feel pressure and vibration during the test, but should not feel anything sharp.

How do I prepare for the biopsy?

- Make sure we have a list of your current medications and allergies.
- Continue to take your medications as usual, unless you receive different instructions from us or from your doctor.
- Wear a comfortable two-piece outfit to your appointment.
- Please bring a supportive bra to wear after the procedure; if you do not have/wear bras, we will provide a supportive wrap.
- Eat and drink normally on the day of the test.
- A Breast Imaging nurse will call you to discuss the test before your appointment.

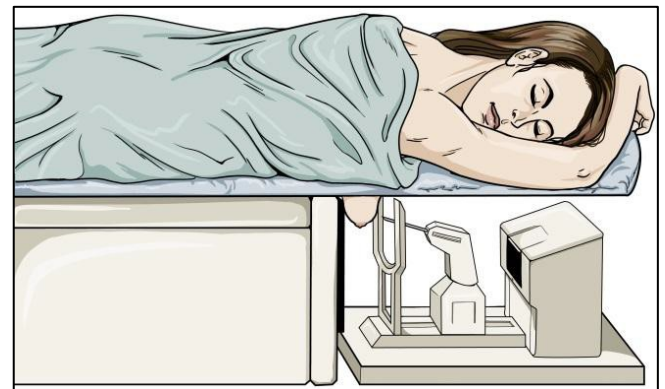
What happens on the day of the biopsy?

1. After you arrive, you will talk with the nurse or radiologist and sign to agree to the test. We will answer any questions you have.
2. You will then lie on your stomach with your head turned to the side on the special biopsy table (figure 2).

Figure 2: This picture shows the biopsy table.



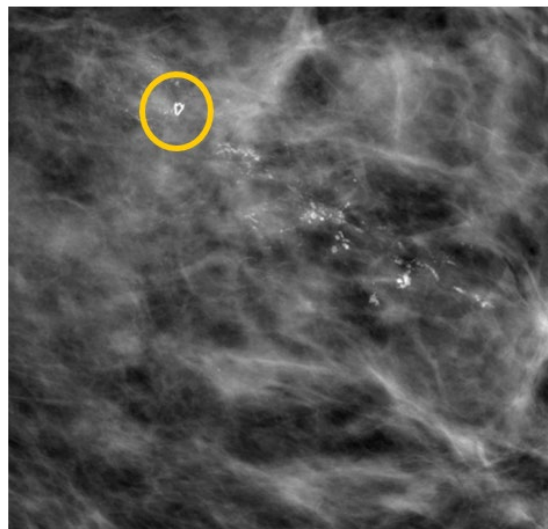
Figure 3: The radiologist uses the biopsy needle underneath the table to take samples from the breast.



3. Your breast will be suspended through the hole in the bed and compressed underneath the table. You will need to stay in this position for about 30 minutes.
4. We will clean your skin, numb your breast with local medication, and place the needle into the breast near the calcifications. You will hear the motor and beeping of the machine while we take samples through the needle but should not feel anything sharp (figure 3).

5. After we know we have an adequate sample, we place a tiny metal biopsy marker in the breast at the site of the biopsy to show doctors who will care for you in the future where the biopsy was done (figure 4). You will not be able to feel this marker. It is also safe in an MRI machine and will not set off any metal detectors.

Figure 4: Biopsy marker in the breast next to sampled calcifications.

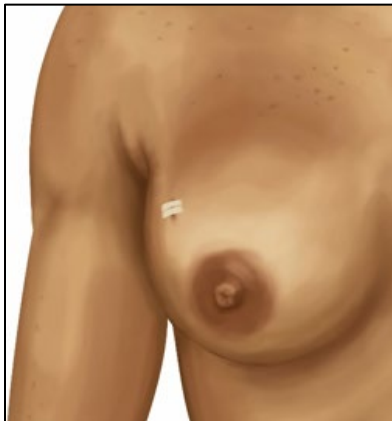


6. After the needle is removed, we will hold pressure over the breast and place a bandage.
7. Before you leave, we will take a mammogram using less pressure than a routine mammogram to show the marker.
8. You will stay for 1 hour after the test and be checked by the nurse to make sure you are doing well before you leave.

What happens after the biopsy?

- You will have a bandage over a very small incision (no stitches) (figure 5).
- If needed you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or use ice packs (20 minutes on and 20 off) for pain.
- Do not lift anything heavier than a gallon of milk (about 9 pounds) or participate in strenuous exercise for 24-48 hours after the biopsy.
- Do not take a bath, swim, or go in a hot tub for 10 days after the biopsy. You may shower the morning after the biopsy.
- You will receive a call from us or from your personal doctor when we get your results from the pathologist, usually within 2-3 business days.

Figure 5: Incision after biopsy with bandage



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