After Your Breast Biopsy

HOW YOUR BREAST BIOPSY WAS DONE

There are two ways a breast biopsy can be done:

- **Needle**
- **Surgical**

Before starting either type of biopsy, a numbing medicine is put into the skin of the breast where the lump was found. This takes away pain during the biopsy.

With the **Needle Biopsy**, a hollow needle is put into the numbed breast. Then the fluid and solid cells inside the breast lump are drawn out through the needle and sent for testing.

- This method takes less than an hour and does not need stitches.
- You can return to your daily activities afterward.

With the **Surgical Biopsy**, the doctor makes a cut (incision) 1-to-2 inches long.
The doctor then removes part or all of the lump and sends it for testing.

- The doctor closes the opening with stitches. The stitches will either dissolve or be removed by your doctor at a later time.
- Some bruising and swelling at the incision is normal.
- There is a slightly higher risk of infection and bleeding with the surgical method.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEEDLE OR SURGICAL BIOPSY

- After your biopsy, a large band aid will cover the skin where the needle was put in or the surgical cut was made. This bandage should be left in place and kept dry for 2-to-3 days. You can take a sponge bath during this time. Keep your bandage dry.
- After that, you can take the bandage off and look at the biopsy area. Check it for signs of infection such as:
  - Redness.
  - Swelling.
  - Worse pain than before.
  - Pus coming from the area.
  - Fever.
- Wear your bra all day and night until you go back to see your doctor. Your bra provides protection and is also good for holding a cold pack for comfort.
- Eat healthy foods to help your body heal faster. Eat foods with protein such as tuna, eggs and milk.
- Protect the area where the biopsy was done. Move slowly and carefully so that your breast does not get bumped or move around too much.
- You can usually go back to work the day after your biopsy.

ADDITIONAL HOME CARE FOR SURGICAL BIOPSY:

- Your stitches will either dissolve by themselves, usually within one week, or be removed by your doctor at your next appointment within 2 weeks.
- It is okay to take showers while stitches are still in. Do not take a tub bath. Your stitches should not be submerged under water.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF YOU SEE SIGNS OF INFECTION:

- Redness
- Swelling
- Worse pain than before
- Pus coming from the area
- You have a fever of 102°F (38.9°C) or higher.

FINDING OUT THE RESULTS OF YOUR TEST

Not all test results are available during your visit. If your test results are not back during the visit, make an appointment with your doctor to find out the results. Do not assume everything is normal if you have not heard from your caregiver or the medical facility. It is important for you to follow up on all of your test results.

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