

Surgical Breast Biopsy

Your Surgery and Recovery at Home

A surgical breast biopsy is done in the Operating Room. You are given either a general anesthetic (medicine that puts you in a very deep sleep) or a sedative.

The surgeon injects numbing medicine to 'freeze' the breast. The surgeon then makes a small cut (incision) in the breast and locates the mass. The tissue is removed and sent to the hospital laboratory to examine for abnormalities.

A surgical biopsy usually takes about 1 hour. You go home the same day.

Going home checklist

- You have a ride home and someone to stay with you for 24 hours, or longer if needed.
- You know what medicine(s) to take, as well as when and how to take them.
- You know what you cannot do for 24 hours (because of anesthetic) including:
 - ✗ **No** driving or operating hazardous machinery
 - ✗ **No** drinking alcohol or using any substance or street drug
 - ✗ **No** making important decisions or signing legal documents

To get your results

Return to see your surgeon in 10 to 14 days. Your surgeon talks with you about the results at that time.

Call the surgeon's office the day after the biopsy to make an appointment.

My appointment is on: _____

Caring for Yourself at Home

Drinking and Eating

Return to your normal diet.

You might feel sick to your stomach (nausea) or throw up (vomit). This should not last long. It is important to stay hydrated.

If you feel sick or throw up:

- Drink 'flat' ginger ale, clear soups, and clear fluids, and eat mild foods until you feel better. Other good choices include dry toast, crackers, popsicles, and gelatin dessert (such as Jell-O). Stay away from caffeine, carbonated soft drinks, and acidic fruit juices while feeling sick.
- Drink and eat small amounts often.
- Rest in bed until you feel better. Place a cool, damp cloth on your face and neck.
- Try not to smoke or be around smoking. It can make your nausea worse.

Activity and Rest

You can usually return to your regular daily activities right away. The sooner you move about, the sooner you will get back to your regular activity.

Do not do any high impact activities (such as aerobics or jogging) for 1 week. This helps to keep bruising to a minimum.

Your incision

You will see some bruising around the incision area. This is normal and should go away over the next 1 to 2 weeks

Always wash your hands before and after touching around your incision site(s).

Leave the bandage in place for 2 days.

Keep the bandage clean and dry.

Take a sponge bath until the bandage is removed. After 2 days and when the bandage is removed, you can shower.

If you have white skin tapes (steri-strips) over your incision, do not remove them. They should fall off within 1 week. If they don't, then remove them.

The stitches used to close the incision dissolve on their own. They do not need to be removed.

Managing pain

Your breast will be sore for the next few days.

To help ease the pain:

- Put an ice pack into a pillow case and place on your breast over the incision for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to 3 hours. (Never put an ice pack directly on your skin.)
- Wear a supportive bra (such as a sports bra) 24 hours a day for the next 1 to 2 days.

Take pain medicine as directed by your surgeon.

- It is best to take your first pill shortly after the biopsy and before the freezing wears off.
- Use acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and/or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®).

Ibuprofen is not for everyone after a procedure. If you have (or have had) health problems such as stomach ulcers, kidney disease, or a heart condition, speak with your surgeon or family practitioner before using ibuprofen.

Always read the label and/or information from the pharmacist about how to take medication safely.

Questions about medications? Speak to your local pharmacist. After-hours, call 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a pharmacist.

When to get help

Call your surgeon or family practitioner

if you have any of the following:

- a fever over 38°C (101°F)
- warm, red, swollen incision, or blood or pus (yellow/green fluid) draining from the area
- the breast becomes very swollen
- pain in the breast that does not ease with pain medicine
- nausea or throwing up not going away
- a dry mouth, only passing a little dark urine, and feeling thirsty
- redness, tenderness, or pain in your calf or lower leg
- feeling increasingly tired or dizzy

Cannot contact your surgeon or family practitioner?

Have any questions about your recovery?

Call 8-1-1 (HealthLinkBC) to speak to a registered nurse any time - day or night.

If you notice any bleeding from the incision:

- Press firmly over the area for 5 to 10 minutes.
- If the bleeding does not stop, go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

Call 9-1-1 if you have:

- trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- chest pain, or
- any sudden severe pain

Family Practitioner: Refers to family doctor or nurse practitioner

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.