Stereotactic Needle Biopsy

What is a stereotactic needle biopsy?

A stereotactic needle biopsy, also called stereotactic core needle biopsy, is a medical test to remove a piece of tissue from your body. The tissue is then tested to find out what it is. Imaging, such as an x-ray or CT, is used during the biopsy to better see where the mass or lesion is that needs to be biopsied.

Stereotactic needle biopsies are often used to biopsy these parts of the body:

- Breast.
- Lung.
- Liver.
- Brain.

Stereotactic biopsies are minimally invasive (only small incisions, or cuts, in the skin), well-tolerated, and widely available.

How do I prepare for a stereotactic needle biopsy?

Usually there is no need to prepare for this test. However, if you are on blood thinners, you may need to stop them several days before the test. Tell your provider about all medications and herbal supplements you take.

How is this test done?

You will be asked to sit or lie down depending on where the biopsy is being done. Imaging with an x-ray or CT scan will be used to find the mass. Local anesthesia, such as lidocaine, will be used to numb the area. A core needle will be inserted near the mass. This needle has a hollow middle, which can collect cells. The needle is normally passed through the lesion a few times to make sure enough tissue is collected. The actual insertion of the needle takes only a few minutes and the whole procedure can take 30 minutes to an hour.

What should I expect after my core needle biopsy?

As the numbing medication wears off, you may have some discomfort. You may have some bleeding at the site of the biopsy. In some cases, a pocket of blood, or a hematoma, will collect in the area of the biopsy. This can be uncomfortable but should resolve over the next few days. If there is severe pain following the procedure, you should contact your provider right away.

How do I receive the results of my core needle biopsy?

The tissue sample is reviewed by a pathologist and a report is written. The pathology report provides information about the patient and the reason for the test. The report will likely detail both normal and abnormal findings. Your provider will be able to discuss your results with you. You may want to ask for a copy for your records.

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