If I Have Questions, Who Do I Call?

If you have questions, please feel free to call the Breast Center at 525-7536 from 7 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. To make an appointment, please call the Department of Medical Imaging at 525-1401 between 8 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

Where Do I Need To Go?

St. Peter’s Breast Center is located on the third floor of 317 South Manning Boulevard, Suite 305. For a map and directions, visit www.sphcs.org/mapdirections or call (518) 525-7536.
What is Breast Needle Biopsy?

Ultrasound-guided breast needle biopsy is a method of removing tissue or cells from an area of concern in the breast using only needles. The sample can then be reviewed in the pathology laboratory to determine if the area is innocent (benign) or could represent cancer (suspicious or malignant).

Why Have A Needle Biopsy?

In the past, the only way to tell if a mass was or was not cancer was to obtain a tissue sample with a surgical biopsy, which involves cutting into the breast. A needle biopsy obtains tissue without cutting into or scarring the breast. Since most breast masses are not cancer, use of a breast needle biopsy can help a woman avoid unnecessary surgery.

What Can I Expect?

The procedure will be fully explained to you, and you will have a chance to have any questions about the procedure answered. You will then be asked to sign a consent form to proceed.

You will be lying down on a stretcher for the procedure. A radiologist will do the procedure, assisted by an ultrasound technologist. The area of concern will first be located with ultrasound, and measurements will be taken as needed.

Your skin will be cleaned with surgical soap, and the breast will be numbed with lidocaine (similar to that used for dental procedures). The needle will be placed into the area of concern using ultrasound for guidance. For core needle biopsy, a tiny skin opening is made to insert the needle; this is not needed for FNA biopsy.

Ultrasound-guided breast needle biopsy is a safe, effective and accurate way to diagnose breast problems. We review the pathology results for all of our needle biopsy patients and correlate them with the imaging findings to ensure accuracy.

Are There Different Types of Needle Biopsy?

Yes. Fine-needle aspiration (FNA) biopsy is a method using small needles to get cells from a lesion. Core needle biopsy (CNB) uses slightly larger needles to obtain small pieces of tissue. We were the first facility in the Capital Region to be fully accredited in all needle biopsy techniques for the breast, including ultrasound-guided FNA and CNB. This allows us to offer the best and easiest diagnosis for each patient, depending on the type of breast abnormality.

How Do I Prepare?

It is extremely important that you inform the technologists or radiologist if you have any allergies, have any bleeding problems or are taking any medications. If you regularly take aspirin or other medications that can promote bleeding, we need to know in advance of the procedure. For example, if you are taking Coumadin® (warfarin), we may have to modify the procedure.

The entire procedure can take as little as 30 minutes. After the procedure, you may have some soreness or a bruise, and you will need to avoid strenuous activity for the rest of the day.