

UCSF Medical Center at Mount Zion

Stereotactic Core Biopsy

What is it?

Stereotactic core biopsy was developed as an alternative to surgical biopsy. It is a less invasive way to obtain the tissue samples needed for diagnosis. This procedure requires less recovery time than does a surgical biopsy, and there is no significant scarring to the breast. Your doctor, the radiologist and you may consider this type of biopsy when there is an abnormality found on a mammogram that cannot be felt. The radiologist can make a judgment about whether the procedure is technically feasible and your doctor may recommend it in your particular situation.

How do I prepare for this exam?

- If you did not have your previous mammograms at UCSF Medical Center, you must bring your previous mammograms with you. If you call the facility where it was performed, they will tell you how to obtain these images on film. If the facility offers a CD of the images, please ask them to print out film images. The radiologist compares the images from prior exams to the current exam to assist in the interpretation. In general, the UCSF Radiologist will want to compare your last five years of mammogram films to the results of the scheduled mammogram.
- Do not wear talcum powder, deodorant, lotion or perfume under your arms or on your breasts. These substances can cause artifacts making the images harder to interpret.
- Wear two-piece clothing so that you only have to remove your top and bra for the examination.
- Jewelry worn should be easily and quickly removable.
- You may be asked to complete a brief breast health questionnaire.

What happens and how long does it take?

After checking in, you will be asked to change into a hospital gown and escorted to the biopsy room. The technologist will ask you to lie face down on the special examination table, making sure you are as comfortable as possible. Your breast will be positioned through a special round opening in the table. The table will then be elevated so the doctor and technologist can work from below.

Step I -- Finding the Abnormal Tissue

The first part of the procedure will seem much like your mammogram, except that you are lying down instead of standing up. Your breast will be compressed with a compression paddle, just as it was during your mammogram. A confirming x-ray will be taken to ensure that the area of the breast containing the lesion is correctly centered in the paddle window. When the position is confirmed, two stereo X-rays will be taken. They are called stereo images because they are images of the same area from different angles.

With the help of a computer, the exact positioning of the biopsy needle is determined from these stereo images.

Step II -- Biopsy of the Abnormal Tissue

Using this information, the doctor will then position the device which holds the biopsy needle for the correct angle of entry. Next, the doctor will numb the biopsy area by injecting a local anesthetic into your breast. This will be done with a very tiny needle and you may feel a slight sting in your breast at the injection site.

After the local anesthetic has taken effect, the physician will insert the biopsy needle into your breast. Another set of stereo X-rays will then be taken to ensure proper needle placement. Once placement is confirmed, the physician will tell you to hold very still while the tissue samples are acquired. When the physician has retrieved all the samples, the compression paddle will be released from your breast. The nurse or technologist will then apply pressure to the biopsy site for five to ten minutes to prevent bleeding. Afterwards, a dressing will be applied which you will wear home.

Who performs this exam?

The Technologist and the Radiologist work together to position you for the biopsy. The Radiologist performs the biopsy.

Will my insurance cover this exam?

Most insurance plans cover this exam but you should check with your insurance carrier to be certain. If you have HMO insurance, check with your plan to make sure that UCSF Medical Center is in your provider network.

How do I schedule this exam?

Call (415) 353-9800 . The scheduling department is open from 8 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Where do I go to have this exam?

□ 1600 Divisadero Street, 2nd floor , Room H2906, San Francisco