

What is a Percutaneous Biopsy?

A needle biopsy is a way of taking a small piece of tissue out of the body, so that it can be examined under a microscope, to diagnose a certain condition or disease. When a biopsy is done through the skin, it is called a percutaneous biopsy.

This procedure is performed in the X-ray Department by an Interventional Radiologist (specialist x-ray doctor). Ultrasound and/or X-ray imaging helps the Radiologist to guide and position the needle into the exact place.

Why do I need this procedure?

Sometimes an area of tissue inside the body needs to be looked at in better detail, when it is not possible to diagnose the condition or disease that may be causing the problem. One of the simplest ways of finding out is by taking a tiny piece of it away for a pathologist (specialist in disease diagnosis) to examine.

What should I expect?

You will be asked to sign a consent form. It is important that you understand the procedure and its benefits and risks. Bring a family member or friend with you, to help with your questions or concerns about the procedure.

On the day of the procedure, you will have an intravenous line (IV) placed into a vein in your arm. This IV line will also be used to give you other medicines and fluids during the procedure.

Depending on where the Radiologist needs to biopsy, you will need to lie on your back, side or stomach. You will be given local anaesthetic and a small biopsy needle is inserted into the tissue. A small sample of the tissue will be taken and the needle is removed. When the procedure is finished, a dressing will be applied to cover the area. It usually takes about 30-45 minutes to perform, but this is not an absolute time-line.

What happens after the procedure?

You may be a little sore after the procedure, but this should gradually disappear. If you are an inpatient, or being admitted, you will go to your hospital room where the staff will monitor you. Each patient's length of stay will vary.

If you are an outpatient, you will go to the Same Day Surgery unit (SDS) to recover and then you can go home. Due to the medication you will receive, you won't be allowed to drive yourself. Make sure you arrange for someone to take you home.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Diagnostic Imaging Department at 416-431-8107 (General campus) or 416-495-2480 (Birchmount campus).