

Excisional Biopsy

Definition of terms:

- Anesthetic**— Medication that produces loss of sensation for pain; may be local or general.
- Antiseptic**— An agent to remove bacteria and other microorganisms; to disinfect.
- Biopsy**— The removal of tissue in order to study the makeup of cells.
- Benign**— Not cancerous; no threat to the body.
- Excisional**— Process of cutting out of the body.
- Hematoma**— An accumulation of blood under the tissues.
- Malignant**— Cancerous, a threat to the body.
- Pathology**— The study of disease process and consequences.

If a physician can feel a suspicious lump, it may be surgically removed from the body with an excisional biopsy. The procedure is performed in an operating room on an out-patient basis.

An assessment and medical history will be taken to determine any conditions such as allergies or previous surgeries. Remember to write down the names of any prescription medications or herbal medications that you take on a regular basis for this assessment interview.

On the day of the surgery, you will report to the surgical unit. Local anesthetic (in the breast only) or general anesthetic (put to sleep) will be administered. The breast will be cleansed with an antiseptic cleanser to destroy bacteria on the skin. The surgeon will cut through the skin to the lump and remove the entire lump and sometimes an area of tissue around the lump referred to as the margins. Several stitches will close the incision area. You will be taken to the recovery area where you will be monitored until your vital signs are normal, you are awake, and are experiencing no vomiting, bleeding, or excessive pain. You will then be discharged.



A small bandage will cover the incision. You will be given discharge instructions on how to care for the wound. Ask your healthcare provider when you may get the incision area wet and when you can return to normal activities. A return appointment will be made with your physician

to see how the wound is healing. The biopsy tissue will be sent to the pathology lab and the results, stating whether the tissue was benign (not cancerous) or malignant (cancerous) will be made available to your physician. Ask when and how you will be informed of the results of the biopsy report.

There is potential for infection after an excisional biopsy because of the cut through the skin. Follow the instructions provided by your physician on how to care for the wound and how to change the bandage. Be sure to keep the bandage dry.

Normal Changes after a Biopsy:

- The area may be slightly sore for several days.
- You may have a mild, aching pain that can be controlled with over-the-counter medications.
- You may have a yellowish draining from the fluid in the biopsy cavity; this is normal.
- Discoloration of the breast (bluish turning to yellowish tones) may occur.

Contact Physician:

- If you have fever over 100.5° F
- If you have increasing redness around incision site.
- If pain increases in the area and is not controlled by over-the-counter pain medication.
- If you have bright red bleeding from the site.