

Breast Needle Localization

Introduction

Some breast abnormalities are too small to be seen or felt. To remove them, the surgeon must be able to find them easily. Breast needle localization is a way of leading the surgeon to the area directly. You will have a mammogram. While your breast is compressed, a very fine wire is placed to mark the area. Sometimes, the area cannot be seen with a mammogram. In this case, ultrasound or MRI may be used to guide the needle localization.

The needle localization is done while your breast is compressed during the mammogram. A picture of the breast is taken to find the area to be localized. The skin over the site is wiped with alcohol. An anesthetic is injected to numb the site. Let the radiologist performing the procedure know if you are allergic to any anesthetic. Then a needle with a wire inside of it is inserted into the breast. Two more images of the breast are taken. If necessary, the needle position will be adjusted. More films are taken to confirm it is at the correct site. When the needle is in the correct place, it will be removed. The fine wire will stay in your breast. Another mammogram will then be taken. It is to map the relationship of the wire's position to the area for the biopsy. The surgeon will use this map to guide the surgery. The wire will be taped in place and covered with a bandage. It is taken out during surgery. Most women say the procedure is uncomfortable. It is not really painful. A staff member will then take you to the Surgical Day Hospital. You will have your operation there.

How long you will be in the hospital will vary. Breast needle localization usually takes 10 minutes, but it can take longer. Surgery can take an hour or more, depending on the procedure you will have. Your doctor will tell you what to expect, but be prepared to spend most of the day with us. Someone can wait with you. You may want to bring something to read while you wait between procedures.

Preparation

- Do not put anything on your breasts or nipples or under your arms on the day of the procedure. This includes talcum, deodorant, and creams.
- Wear a shirt that buttons in the front and pants. They should be easy to remove and put on after surgery.

Please share any questions and concerns about this procedure with your doctor or nurse.

