



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Breast Needle Localization

This information explains your breast needle localization procedure at Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK).

Breast needle localization is a procedure done to find exactly where your abnormal breast tissue is and mark its location. This will help your doctor find the area easily during your surgery.

Before Your Procedure

Take devices off your skin

You may wear certain devices on your skin. Before your scan or procedure, some device makers recommend you take off your:

- Continuous glucose monitor (CGM)
- Insulin pump

Talk with your healthcare provider about scheduling your appointment closer to the date you need to change your device. Make sure you have an extra device with you to put on after your scan or procedure.

You may not be sure how to manage your glucose while your device is off. If so, before your appointment, talk with the healthcare provider who manages your diabetes care.

The Day of Your Procedure

- Don't put anything on your breasts, nipples, or under your arms on the day of the procedure. This includes powder, deodorant, perfumes, colognes, and creams.
- Wear a shirt that you can easily remove.
- Follow any additional instructions your healthcare provider gave you.

During Your Procedure

You'll have your breast localization procedure done during a mammogram while your breast is compressed. If your doctor can't see the abnormal tissue on the mammogram, you may have an ultrasound or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) instead. These are imaging procedures that will help your doctor find the abnormal tissue.

Once your doctor finds the abnormal tissue, your radiologist will give you an injection (shot) of local anesthetic (medication to make an area numb) into the area.

After the area is numb, your radiologist will insert a needle

with a thin wire into your breast. They'll take a series of images of your breast using a mammogram to make sure the needle is in the correct position. Then, they'll remove the needle and the wire will stay in your breast. You'll have another set of images taken to show the exact location of the wire.

The wire will be covered with a piece of gauze and taped to your skin. Your surgeon will use the wire to find the abnormal breast tissue during your surgery.

After Your Procedure

After your procedure, MSK staff will bring you to the Breast Imaging Department in Radiology for your next appointment.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Breast Needle Localization - Last updated on February 7, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center