

## Biopsy guided by CT or ultrasound

This fact sheet tells you what a computed tomography (CT-) or ultrasound-guided biopsy is, and what is involved. Please read this sheet before having your procedure. If you have any questions, ask your doctor.

### What is CT- or ultrasound-guided biopsy?

A CT- or ultrasound-guided biopsy is a medical imaging test that uses X-rays or ultrasound to take images of the area that needs to be tested.

The radiologist (a specialist doctor) uses the images to help guide them to extract a small piece of tissue from your body for further testing.

### What is involved?

You will be given instructions on how to prepare for your test. **Before the test, you should tell your doctor and the imaging staff if you are pregnant or think you might be pregnant.**

The decision to use CT or ultrasound will depend on your needs. If a CT scanner is used for this test, you will receive a small dose of radiation while lying inside the scanner. If an ultrasound machine is used, you will be lying on a table and a small plastic probe (which uses sound waves) will be placed over the area of interest to guide the radiologist.

For the biopsy, a needle is inserted in the area of interest, and a very small sample is taken, which will then be viewed under a microscope.

During the test, you should keep still, especially if you're having the CT-guided test.

Although many biopsies are painless, a local anaesthetic or mild sedative (medicine to make you drowsy) may be given if needed.

The whole test should take 10 to 40 minutes, depending on the area being biopsied.

### What happens after the test?

The radiologist will assess the images and then send the results to your referring doctor.

Depending on the type of biopsy you have had, you will be kept in the imaging department for between 30 minutes and four hours. You will then be allowed to go home with care instructions.

### Are there any risks?

The dose of radiation used in a CT scan is generally small and rarely causes any harmful effects. The benefits of detecting a problem are generally much more important than any potential risk from receiving such a small dose of radiation. If you have many CTs, though, there is a slight increase in the lifetime risk of cancer.

Depending on the area being biopsied, there may be other risks, such as a pneumothorax (collapsed lung) with a lung biopsy. You can discuss any concerns with your doctor.

There are no known risks with the use of ultrasound.

If you took a sedative medicine, you may get side effects from this medicine. This will be discussed with you if needed.

### For more information

InsideRadiology by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists: [www.insideradiology.com.au](http://www.insideradiology.com.au)

RadiologyInfo by the American College of Radiology and Radiological Society of North America: [www.radiologyinfo.org](http://www.radiologyinfo.org)

The Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging: [www.imagegently.org](http://www.imagegently.org)

The Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency: [www.arpsa.gov.au](http://www.arpsa.gov.au)

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