



# Having a biopsy

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**MARCELLE RUTH**  
CANCER CENTRE & SPECIALIST HOSPITAL

**The Marcelle Ruth Cancer Centre  
& Specialist Hospital is the first  
comprehensive healthcare centre of its  
kind in Nigeria and, indeed, West Africa.**

**> Our promise**

In everything we do, we believe that compassion and care make all the difference.

With vast experience and understanding, our specialist team uses the very latest technology and treatments to deliver the best outcomes possible.

From screening and diagnosis to treatment and ongoing support, we are committed to providing outstanding care to those in need.

# About this booklet

We understand it can be overwhelming for anyone to undergo cancer care, but we are here to provide you with help and support.

The focus of this leaflet is to help you and your family understand more about biopsies.

# Biopsies

## What is a biopsy?

This involves taking a small sample of tissue from your body. This is done via a biopsy needle that is inserted through your skin to the location where the sample needs to be taken. The sample taken is sent to the lab to determine the nature of the sample.

A biopsy can be done with or without image guidance. Image-guided biopsy can be done with ultrasound, CT scanner, MRI and X-rays.

## Are there any risks?

Risks involved in biopsies depend on the area of the body where it is being carried out. Risks associated with the procedure may include, but are not limited to, infections, pain, bleeding at the site of biopsy, injury to blood vessels and nerves and puncture of an organ.

Risks are also associated with conscious sedation if used. They include respiratory depression and aspiration amongst others. However, serious complications from biopsies are rare. You will be extensively counselled about the risks prior to the procedure by the surgeon.

## How do I prepare for the procedure?

- A complete blood test and clotting profile will be done on or before the day of the procedure.
- A medication review will be done. If you are taking blood thinners or anticoagulants, this may need to be stopped temporarily 24–48 hours before the procedure. Also, if you are diabetic, let our doctors and nurses know.
- You may need to fast for six hours before a procedure if conscious sedation will be used.

## How is the biopsy done?

Usually it is done in the minor operative room. The area where the needle will be inserted will be cleaned and draped with sterile materials and some local anaesthetic drugs will be given under the skin to numb the area of insertion. IV medications may also be given to relax you and for pain management if necessary.

The needle will be guided to the location with or without image guidance. Several samples will usually be obtained. Samples taken will then be sent to the laboratory for analysis.

## Following a biopsy

- You will be taken to the observation room for some time.
- Take your medications as prescribed. This will usually include analgesics and antibiotics.
- Dressings may need to remain in place for a duration that is advised by the surgeon.
- Avoid trauma to the area of biopsy.
- A follow-up appointment will be given to check for healing and signs of infection.

## When to call your doctor

Call your doctor right away, if you have any of the following:

- severe pain, swelling, bleeding or discharge around the area of biopsy
- fever, chest pain, shortness of breath, increased heart rate, coughing up blood
- feeling unwell.

### Kindly note

You may have received medication that helped to minimise pain and helped you to relax during the procedure. This is considered conscious sedation. It is important to note that these drugs can affect coordination and cause mental clouding amongst other side effects. Activities like driving, operating machinery and making important decisions might be impaired and hence should be avoided for the next 24 hours.

If you have any other questions or information about the procedure, please ring our client services managers on +234 809 042 5888 or + 234 906 200 0773.



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