



Patient & Family Guide

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Stereotactic Biopsy

QE II Health Sciences
Centre



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Stereotactic Biopsy

Your doctor has told you that you may have a tumour (lumps or growths of abnormal cells) or lesion (damaged tissue) in your brain.

You will have a procedure called a stereotactic biopsy to help your doctor learn what kind of tumour or lesion you may have. This surgery helps to diagnose and/or treat brain conditions (like movement disorders, pain syndromes, and tumours).

How is the biopsy taken?

- A biopsy is when a small sample of tissue is taken from your body for testing.
- The surgeon will take a tissue sample using a biopsy needle.
- A doctor (pathologist) will look at the sample in the lab and make a diagnosis.

What will happen during my surgery?

- The stereotactic biopsy happens in the operating room (OR).
- When you are in the OR, an anesthesiologist (doctor who gives you medication to put you to sleep) will give you medication before your surgery. Depending on your needs, you may have general anesthetic (medication to put you to sleep) or sedation (medication to help you relax). Most biopsies are done with general anesthetic. Your surgeon will talk with you about your options.

- When you are sedated or asleep, the surgeon will put your head in a clamp. This will keep your head from moving during the procedure.
- Pins hold the clamp in place. Your surgeon may have to shave a small amount of your hair when they put the pins in.
- You will have a local anesthetic (freezing medication) at the pin sites to keep you from feeling pain.
- The surgeon will use MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and/or CT (computed tomography) scans of your brain and an image guided system (a computer in the OR) to find where they will take the biopsy from, and the best place to make the incision (cut) in your scalp. Your surgeon may need to shave some of your hair around the incision site.
- The surgeon will make a small hole in your skull. They will put the biopsy needle through the hole to reach the lesion. Once they have taken a tissue sample from the lesion, they will remove the biopsy needle.
- The sample will be taken to the pathologist for a diagnosis. It usually takes one week (7 days) to get the final diagnosis.
- After the procedure, you will be taken to the recovery room.
- Nurses in the recovery room will make sure you are doing OK and then they will take you back to your room.

