



Patient & Family Guide
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Stereotactic Biopsy



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Your doctor has told you that you may have a brain tumour. You will have a procedure called a **stereotactic biopsy** to help your doctor learn what type of brain tumour or lesion (problem area) you have. The stereotactic biopsy will happen in the operating room (OR).

Stereotactic surgery is used to diagnose or treat several types of brain-related conditions, such as movement disorders, pain syndromes, and brain tumours. A **biopsy** is when a small sample of tissue is taken. A pathologist (a doctor who diagnoses changes in body tissues or fluids) will look at the tissue sample and make a diagnosis.

Once you are in the OR, an anesthesiologist will give you medication to help you relax. Most biopsies are done under general anesthetic. Your surgeon will talk with you about whether you will have sedation (to relax you) or general anesthesia (to put you to sleep) during the procedure.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

Once you are sedated or asleep, your head will be secured in a special head clamp. The clamp will keep your head from moving during the procedure. The clamp is held in place with special pins. Your surgeon may have to shave a little bit of hair when they put the pins in, as well as some hair around the incision (cut). Freezing medication (local anesthetic) is used at the pin sites to prevent pain.

Your MRI and/or CT scan will help guide your surgeon to the proper place in your brain. The scans are used together with a special computer in the OR, called an “image guided system”. This lets your surgeon find the exact spot of the lesion and choose the best spot for the scalp incision. A small hole is made in the skull. Next, a biopsy needle goes into the target using image guidance.

With the biopsy needle, a small piece of the lesion is taken out. The pathologist will look at the lesion sample under a microscope and tell what type of tumour or lesion you have. It usually takes one week to get the final diagnosis.

After the biopsy, you will be taken to the recovery room. Nurses will make sure you are doing OK and then they will take you back to your room.

