

## **Feel a Lump in Breast or Abnormal Finding on Mammogram or Ultrasound**

A Guide for Patients/Families



Most breast lumps are not cancerous. The only way to determine if your breast lump is cancer, is to consult a qualified doctor and follow their advice. Similarly, all abnormalities on mammograms are not cancer. These abnormalities may need additional tests to exclude the possibility of cancer.

### **The following findings in the breast require an evaluation by a physician:**

- Lump, hardness or thickening in the breast or armpit.
- Swelling, warmth, redness, or darkening.
- Change in the size or shape.
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin.
- Itchy, scaly, or sore nipple.
- Pulling in (retraction) of nipple.
- Nipple discharge.

Anytime you are worried about a change in your breast or have any of the above warning signs, you must consult a doctor for a clinical breast examination (CBE). For most women, the results of CBE are good news, as often, an area of normal breast tissue may be more prominent and thus feel like a lump. However, if your doctor finds something abnormal on examination, tests may be necessary, and you must follow the doctor's recommendation.

### **Tests to be considered if CBE is abnormal**

Your physician may recommend the following tests for any abnormality found during CBE

- a mammogram and/or
- a breast ultrasound.

### **If the results of your initial tests are abnormal, additional tests may be needed.**

Additional tests will depend on the type of abnormality and will be recommended by the radiologist or your surgeon. The plan may include:

- Follow-up mammogram with additional views or a breast ultrasound (if not done).
- Follow-up within a few months.

- Breast MRI.
- Biopsy.

### **Biopsy:**

A biopsy is a sample of tissue taken from the suspicious area of the breast, which is then studied in the laboratory to determine the presence of cancer. Breast Biopsies do not lead to the spread of cancer.

### **Types of biopsies for diagnosis**

### **There are 2 main types of biopsies:**

1. **Needle biopsy:** A tissue or cell sample is taken using a needle. This is the standard method used to diagnose or rule out breast cancer.
2. **Surgical biopsy:** tissue or cell sample is taken through an incision made in your breast in the operating room. A surgical biopsy is usually avoided as a first step in diagnosis, but it may become necessary in some situations.

### **The Pathology Report**


The breast tissue removed during a biopsy is sent to a lab/pathologist who determines whether or not the tissue contains cancer. The pathology reports of biopsy may contain information on

- Tumor type
- Estrogen Receptor (ER) and Progesterone Receptor (PR)
- Her 2 neu
- Ki-67



These results may be written in separate reports.

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