Wire Localization Using Mammography

Wire localization is done before a breast biopsy or lumpectomy. It is done to locate a site of concern that can be seen on a mammogram, but cannot be felt.

Using mammography, a radiologist will place one or more fine needles and wires into the lesion in your breast. The wire will guide the surgeon to the tissue to be removed.

You will check into the Outpatient Surgery Center where you will change into a gown and robe. You will have an IV started. You will be brought by wheelchair to the Breast Center for the procedure.

During The Procedure
You will begin by having a mammogram of your breast. Your breast will be compressed between two paddles. You will be asked to stay very still so your breast does not move.

1. The staff will clean the breast with an antiseptic solution.
2. The doctor will inject a numbing medicine (lidocaine) into your breast. You will feel a sting, but our goal is that you not feel any pain during the procedure.
3. A small needle is placed into your breast at the site of concern. You may feel pressure during the procedure. If you feel pain, please let the staff know so that we can help lessen any discomfort or pain.
4. After the needle is placed, a second mammogram will be taken to confirm that the needle is in the correct place. The needle may need to be moved and further mammograms taken to make sure the needle is in the right place. When the needle placement is confirmed, a small wire is inserted into the needle and into the area of interest. The needle is removed and a wire is left behind.
5. The images taken are available to the surgeon who will refer to them during your surgery.

After The Procedure
Once you have been prepared for surgery, the surgeon will make an incision into your breast to remove the wire and the tissue around it. When the tissue is removed, it is x-rayed to assure that the tissue contains the same area of concern seen on the mammogram.

The tissue is sent to the pathology lab where a pathologist will look under a microscope to see what types of cells are present in the tissue removed.

Reports are sent to your surgeon when the results are complete. This takes 3 – 5 working days. Your surgeon will contact you to discuss results with you.

The Spanish version of this Health Facts for You is #5988.