What is a Breast Biopsy, Wire Localization, Clip Placement MRI Scan?
Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is a usually painless scan that helps doctors diagnose and treat medical conditions. MRI uses a powerful magnetic field, radio waves and a computer to produce detailed pictures of organs, soft tissues, bone and virtually all other internal body structures. MRI does not use radiation as X-rays do.

Detailed MR images allow doctors to better evaluate parts of the body and certain diseases that they may not see with other imaging methods such as X-ray, ultrasound or computed tomography (CT).

These detailed images also help doctors find abnormal tissue during surgery. Before surgery, the MR images allow doctors to place a guide wire that acts as a “road map” to the abnormal tissue. The guide wire helps ensure removal of abnormal tissue, while saving the amount of normal breast tissue removed.

An MRI-guided breast biopsy is a non-surgical, minimally invasive procedure used to obtain tissue samples for microscopic examination. MRI-guided breast biopsy costs less than a surgical biopsy, can be completed in less than an hour and has few complications. MRI guidance is used to find the area that usually cannot be felt.

Before your test
- There are no diet restrictions, eat and drink as usual for the MRI procedure.
- You may be asked to have some lab work drawn prior to your MRI.
- Take usual medications on exam day.
- Aspirin and anticoagulants (blood thinners) increase the risk of bleeding and bruising. **Patients taking anticoagulants (blood-thinners) or aspirin should contact the doctor managing those medications to see if they can safely stop them prior to the biopsy.**
- Herbal substances that affect bleeding, such as Gingko biloba, should be stopped two weeks prior to the breast biopsy.
- When you schedule your biopsy, please let the scheduler know if you have any allergies to latex, lidocaine, as well as any history of anticoagulants.
- Wear a supportive bra
- You will be asked to fill out an MRI screening questionnaire to identify any metal (devices, implants) inside your body from surgery or shrapnel and for metal shavings in your eyes. Many devices that contain metal can be safely imaged.
- You will be asked to remove your watch, jewelry or garments with metal closures from the part of your body being imaged. These will be locked in a locker.
- You will be asked to put on a gown.
- Anyone coming with you into the MRI room must also be screened as above.
Please arrive 30 minutes prior to your appointment time. Please register at the St. Joseph Hospital Outpatient Pavilion on the first floor.

If you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant please tell the technologist.

If you have a cardiac pacemaker please tell the technologist.

During your test
The radiologist will review the procedure with you, answer your questions and have you sign a consent form.

Your skin will be cleaned before the radiologist administers lidocaine, a local anesthetic. This will numb an area about the size of a quarter. A very small incision will be made and several tissue samples will be obtained.

During the procedure you will be informed about what is happening. If you experience discomfort, the radiologist can give you more local anesthetic during the procedure.

During a wire placement
A radiologist will use the detailed MR images to place a needle into abnormal tissue in the breast. Once the needle is in position, a thin wire is placed through the needle. The needle is then removed, leaving the wire in place to be used as a guide for the surgeon during a breast biopsy procedure. The surgeon in the operating room removes the wire and the abnormal tissue.

During a biopsy
You will be asked to lie on your stomach on a padded table with the breast suspended through an opening. An MRI scan of the breast will be done to locate the biopsy area. The radiologist will perform the biopsy from the side; the affected breast will be slightly compressed during the procedure. Additional images may be taken after the procedure. Tissue samples are then sent to the Pathology department for processing, interpretation and reporting.

After your test
- The radiologist or technologist will apply pressure to the biopsy area for several minutes to stop any bleeding.
- The biopsy area will be closed with a steri-strip and sterile dressing.
- You will be given a small ice pack for your bra to help reduce bruising. It is recommended to apply ice on and off the rest of the day.
- You should be able to drive or return to work following the biopsy.
- Avoid heavy lifting for the next three days to prevent bleeding or extended bruising.
- Take a non-aspirin pain reliever like Tylenol, Advil or Motrin for discomfort. Avoid aspirin for 48 hours.
☐ Remove dressings and shower the morning after the biopsy.
☐ Leave the steri-strips in place. They should begin to peel off on their own in four to five days.
☐ Check the biopsy area daily; contact your doctor if you are experiencing a lot of pain, bleeding, swelling, drainage, redness, or if the area is warm to touch.
☐ The radiologist will not be able to give you any results; however, the results should be available to the doctor who ordered the biopsy within one to two business days.
☐ Your doctor should contact you with the results of your biopsy in about three to five working days after the procedure.
☐ Follow-up imaging may be recommended in six months.

Thank you
We are honored that you have selected St. Joseph Hospital to serve your healthcare needs.