

## Breast Cancer - Biopsy vs. Surgery

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Saturday, 19 February 2011 16:30 -

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An estimated 182,800 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in 2000. Approximately 42,200 deaths will occur in women from breast cancer in 2000. One in eight women or 12.6% of all women will get breast cancer in her lifetime.

Women are advised to perform a breast cancer self exam monthly. If an unusual lump is found, they should see their doctor. However, what happens next is often sub-optimal care. For most lumps, it is best to do a needle biopsy first. About 80% of these show that the lump is not cancer and further surgery is not necessary. However, often doctors will do a surgical biopsy which is a more complicated procedure and in most cases has no better detection rates. If cancer is detected, a second surgical procedure will need to be performed.

Here is a recent study which highlights the sub-optimal treatment path which causes more complications and expense than necessary.

[American Journal of Surgery](#)

[The New York Times](#)

Here is a good reference on breast cancer.

[National Cancer institute](#)