

# Radioactive Seed Localized Excision

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## What is a radioactive seed localized excision?

- An **excision** is the surgical removal of an area of breast tissue.
- The **radioactive seed** is a tiny metal seed, about the size of a small sesame seed. The implanted seed contains a small amount of radiation. The seed will stay in your body until it is taken out during your surgery.
- A radioactive seed **localization** is done by radiology to help your surgeon to locate the area of breast tissue that needs to be removed.
  - Before your surgery, a radiologist will take pictures of your breast using the mammogram or ultrasound.
  - When (s)he locates the area in question, (s)he will use lidocaine to numb part of your breast.
  - (S)he then will insert a radioactive seed to the target area of breast tissue. You will have a small band-aid placed over the site. You do not have to take any special precautions while the seed is in place.
  - During surgery, your surgeon will use a sterile Geiger counter to locate the target area and then remove the radioactive seed along with the tissue around it.
- After surgery, the removed tissue (“the specimen”) is sent to pathology to be looked at under the microscope.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: Will I become radioactive?

**A:** The items you touch, people you encounter and clothes you wear will not become radioactive. If you have any questions, please contact the Radiation Safety Service Department at 617-732-5963.

### Q: Will an excision change the shape or size of my breast?

**A:** Maybe. The answer depends on how much tissue your surgeon needs to remove, where the target area is, and the original size and shape of your breast.

### Q: Will I have a scar?

**A:** Most women have a small, subtle scar at the site of the excision. If you tend to develop dark scars, you are more likely to have a visible scar.

### Q: How long does the excision procedure take?

**A:** An excision alone is usually under an hour. You can plan to be at the hospital for at least half the day.

### Q: When will I know the results from my excision?

**A:** The final pathology results from your surgery will take 1-2 weeks.