SARATH PALAKODETI
DO · FACS · FAACS
Comprehensive Breast & Aesthetic Surgery
Elegant · Elevated · Experience

PATIENT RESOURCE · BREAST IMAGING

I Got a BIRADS 4 Mammogram — What Happens Now?

BIRADS 4 means suspicious — and biopsy is recommended. That is not a cancer diagnosis. Here is what it means, what biopsy involves, and what your next steps are.

BIRADS 4 — THE THREE SUBCATEGORIES

Suspicious covers a wide range — know your subcategory

BIRADS 4A — Low suspicion
2–10% malignancy risk.
More likely benign than malignant. Biopsy recommended to confirm.

BIRADS 4B — Intermediate suspicion
10–50% malignancy risk.
Genuinely uncertain. Biopsy is the only way to get a definitive answer.

BIRADS 4C — Moderate-high suspicion
50–95% malignancy risk.
Higher concern — not the near-certainty of BIRADS 5, but biopsy is urgent.

WHAT BIOPSY MEANS

A biopsy gets the answer — it is not a confirmation of cancer

The majority of BIRADS 4 biopsies — particularly 4A findings — return benign results. Biopsy is almost always performed with image guidance (ultrasound or stereotactic) as a minimally invasive outpatient procedure under local anesthesia. It typically takes 30 to 60 minutes and most patients return to normal activity the same day. Results typically return within 3 to 5 business days.

Benign result
The tissue is not cancerous. You will be advised on return to routine screening or short-interval follow-up depending on the specific finding.

High-risk lesion
Not cancer, but may require surgical excision to fully evaluate surrounding tissue. Your physician will explain next steps specific to your finding.

Malignant result
Cancer is present. This begins the treatment conversation — and early detection at this stage produces the best outcomes. A surgical consultation is the immediate next step.

YOUR NEXT STEPS

Prompt and specific

1. Schedule your biopsy promptly.
Call your ordering physician or radiology center today. Most biopsies can be scheduled within 1–2 weeks. Do not wait for them to call you.

2. Ask which subcategory your finding is.
4A, 4B, or 4C — this tells you the level of suspicion and helps calibrate appropriate concern.

3. Bring someone with you to the biopsy.
Not because it is dangerous — it is not. Having support in a stressful moment is worthwhile.

4. Write your questions down before results come back.
When results arrive the conversation moves quickly. Have your questions ready in writing so you leave with answers.

5. Know where to go if the result is malignant.
Dr. Palakodeti’s office prioritizes prompt scheduling for newly diagnosed patients.

MY QUESTIONS & NOTES

Write your questions before your biopsy results appointment.

This guide is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult your physician or care team for guidance specific to your situation.

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