

Taking a sample of your breast or removing an abnormality using a vacuum device

Breast Imaging

Information for Patients

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Introduction

If an abnormal area in your breast is found after a mammogram or ultrasound scan, you may need to have more tests to find out what this area is.

This is done by taking a sample (biopsy) of the breast tissue so it can be looked at under a microscope. There are several types of breast biopsy procedures. The type of biopsy that you will have, will depend on the location and size of the abnormal area.

If a previous biopsy did not give a definite result and more tissue is needed to make a diagnosis, you may be offered a vacuum assisted biopsy. This is done with a vacuum machine, using a mammogram or ultrasound imaging for guidance.

The procedure will take up to 1 hour and you may eat and drink as normal before it.

We hope this leaflet will answer some of the questions that you may have.

What are the benefits of a vacuum biopsy procedure?

This procedure allows us to take a large sample of your breast to make a diagnosis. Sometimes we can remove an abnormality with the vacuum device. This may mean that surgery is not needed.

The results from this biopsy can show if there is a cancer or another condition which may need treatment. A large number of abnormalities turn out to be non-cancerous (benign), with no risk to your health.

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Are there any risks with this procedure?

- Pain: 56% of patients had some pain, whilst 44% had no pain at all. These figures are taken from our audit. During the procedure local anaesthetic is used to numb the area. It is normal to feel pressure and movement during the biopsy but it should not be painful. After the procedure we recommend paracetamol for any pain as the anaesthetic wears off, usually after a few hours.
- Bruising: the associated risk of bruising is 1 in 10. Result from our audit suggest 89% of patients had some form of bruising. A member of staff will press firmly on the area after the biopsy to try and minimise any bruising.
- Bleeding: some bleeding is expected with this biopsy however the risk of more severe bleeding is 1 in 100 patients, this is a low risk. A member of staff will press firmly on the area to stop any bleeding that may occur.
- Infection: the associated risk of infection is 1 in 10,000 patients, which is considered very low. With any procedure where the skin is broken there is a risk of infection, every effort is taken to keep this risk to a minimum.

Sometimes you might need to stay in hospital for observation. Very rarely a small operation may be needed to control bleeding.

How is the procedure done?

- The procedure is usually done whilst you are sitting or lying down.
- The abnormal area in the breast is found by X-ray or ultrasound.
- Once found, local anesthetic is used to make the area go numb.
- A biopsy needle device connected to a vacuum machine is then placed through the skin to the area.
- Breast tissue is then sucked through the needle by the vacuum. Several samples of tissue can be collected at one time without removing the needle.
- The machine used during the biopsy will make a humming noise.
- If X-ray guidance is used, your breast will be compressed in the mammogram machine during the procedure. It is important to keep as still as possible.
- If ultrasound is used, the ultrasound probe will be used to find the abnormality.
- The tissue that is removed will be sent to the laboratory to be examined. It can take 2 weeks for the results.

Having a marker inserted in your breast during the procedure

Sometimes, a small metal clip (or marker) is placed in the breast where the biopsy was taken from. This is so the area can be found again if a further biopsy or surgery is needed.

This marker is made of titanium and will not cause you any problems. It will not set off airport security alarms and is safe if you have an MRI scan in the future. It can stay in your breast forever without you being aware of it.

Care after your biopsy

A member of staff will press the breast firmly until any bleeding stops, and then apply a dressing. You will be asked to stay in the Breast Care Centre for 30 minutes, without eating or drinking, to make sure that you are well enough to go home.

Please leave the dressing in place and dry for 24 hours.

Do not do any tiring activity, exercise or heavy lifting for the rest of the day. You will be able to drive the same day.

If you have any bleeding from the biopsy site apply firm pressure over the dressing until it stops. If Steri-Strips have been put over the wound leave them to come off by themselves.

When will I get the results of the biopsy?

Before you leave we will give you a follow-up appointment within 14 days. However, if the results are not ready, we may have to contact you to rearrange your appointment at short notice.

Contact details

If you have any questions, please contact the nurses at the Breast Care Centre on
0116 250 2513 Monday to Friday 9am to 4.00pm

An answerphone service is available on this number, but messages are only listened to during working hours.

If you need advice outside of these hours please contact:

- your on-call GP.
- NHS helpline on 111 (24 hours).
- Ward 34 Glenfield Hospital (Monday to Friday, 24 hours) 0116 250 2490.
- Surgical Admissions Unit (weekends and Bank Holidays) 0116 258 5332.

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