

Magseed Localisation

Information for patients



A Magseed is a small clip that is placed into the breast. This helps guide surgeons to find small breast lumps during lumpectomy surgery. This leaflet is designed to provide more information about Magseed.

Why do we use the seed?

Many of the lumps we find are too small for the surgeon to be able to feel. Traditionally a wire was placed into the lump and used to mark the tissue involved.

Now instead of a wire, a Magseed is used to locate the area.

What is the Magseed?

A Magseed is made using a medical grade form of stainless steel. It is about the size of a grain of rice measuring 5x1mm. It is inserted into the breast under ultrasound or mammogram guidance. As the Magseed is metallic it can be found using a handheld magnetic device.

This helps surgeons identify the correct area of breast to remove, making surgery more straight-forward.

What is involved in Magseed placement?

Local anaesthetic will first be injected into your breast to numb the area, following which, a needle is used to place the Magseed in your breast, by a medical imaging specialist. This is similar to having a core biopsy, although less uncomfortable.

Afterwards, a mammogram is then taken to check the Magseed is in a good position.

At surgery, a handheld magnetic detector is used to find the Magseed once you are asleep. The lumpectomy will then take place and the Magseed will be removed with the breast tissue.

How safe is the Magseed?

There is published evidence to show that they are safe. Many other breast units have changed from using wires to using Magseeds.

What are the benefits?

Traditionally, a wire would be placed into the lump which surgeons would use to locate the tissue to be removed. Using the Magseed instead of a wire has some specific advantages.

- We can place the seed into the lump in advance, unlike the wire which would have been placed on the morning of your surgery. This makes the day of surgery less busy and stressful for you.
- Unlike the wire, the Magseed is so small that that you will not notice it in your breast.
- With the use of Magseed, surgeons are able to find the area that needs to be removed more easily.
- The seed is removed during the operation with the lump.

What are the possible risks?

The needle used to insert the Magseed may cause some discomfort and local anaesthetic is used to reduce this. It is similar to having the core biopsy taken to diagnose your cancer, although it should be less uncomfortable. Possible complications are similar to those of a biopsy, including pain, bleeding, infection and inflammation.

If you take any blood thinning medicines please bring these with you to your appointment.

There is a small risk that when the Magseed is inserted, it may not lie within the lump. When this happens, additional localisation techniques, such as a wire, may be used.

Frequently Asked Questions

Would I need to take painkillers beforehand?

No, local anaesthetic is used during the procedure to minimise discomfort. You can take paracetamol if your breast is sore or tender afterwards. Your doctor or nurse will provide you with more information.

Would I be able to drive afterwards?

Yes, you can go back to normal activity straight away.

Is it useful to bring a relative to the appointment?

Patients often find it helpful to bring a familiar face to their appointments for support.

Would it cause an airport security x-ray machine to alarm?

No, airport security x-ray machines cannot detect Magseeds.

Contact details

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