

X-ray guided vacuum assisted breast biopsy

Information for patients



Leeds
Radiology

Introduction

It is important that you understand what will happen during this procedure and why it is required. This leaflet should answer many of the questions you may have. You will have the opportunity to ask any further questions when you arrive.

Please bring this leaflet with you - if you agree for the procedure to go ahead, we will ask you to give your written consent by signing the section at the end.

Why do I need a vacuum biopsy?

Your mammogram has shown an abnormality in your breast. You may already have had a biopsy of this area, where the result was either inadequate or inconclusive, so further samples are required. Sometimes we use this procedure to remove breast lesions.

What is a vacuum biopsy?

A vacuum biopsy is similar to the previous biopsy you may have had, but the needle is slightly larger and gentle suction is applied to it, allowing removal of more tissue than a standard biopsy. This procedure aims to reduce the likelihood of you having to have an operation to make a diagnosis of the abnormality in your breast.

Who will perform the biopsy?

The biopsy will be performed by a Radiologist specialising in Breast Imaging or Consultant Mammographer.

Is any special preparation required?

- You should contact the department straight away if you are taking any medication to thin your blood (e.g. Aspirin, Warfarin or Clopidogrel).
- Let us know about any allergies.
- We ask that you don't use any body lotion on the day of your appointment.
- You may eat and drink as normal.

What does a vacuum biopsy entail?

Further mammograms may be required before the biopsy.

Depending on the area of the breast we need to biopsy, you will be sitting or lying down and your breast will be compressed in the x-ray machine during the procedure. Further images will be obtained to accurately locate the breast abnormality. It is important that you keep very still.

Your skin will be cleaned. Local anaesthetic will be injected, which stings for a few moments as it takes effect and numbs the area. A small nick will be made in the skin (5mm or so in size) to allow the biopsy needle to be inserted.

The biopsy needle stays in the breast until all the samples have been obtained. The equipment makes a variety of noises during the procedure.

Once enough samples have been obtained, it may be necessary to insert a tiny metallic (surgical stainless steel) clip. This will mark the biopsy site in case we need to locate the area in future. The clip is safe, can be left in the breast indefinitely and will not prevent/impair any future tests. If a clip is inserted, a further mammogram will be performed to check its position in the breast.

What happens after the procedure?

Occasionally it may be necessary to stitch the skin at the biopsy site.

After the biopsy, firm pressure will be applied to the breast to minimise bruising, and a dressing will be applied. You will be given aftercare advice.

We ask that you remain in the Breast Imaging Department for a further 20-30 minutes. Before you leave, your dressing will be checked and a clinic appointment will be made or confirmed for you to get the results of your biopsy (usually 7-10 days afterwards).

We advise you take it easy for the rest of the day to keep bleeding and bruising to a minimum, and you avoid strenuous activities for about 48 hours. We also advise you don't drive immediately after the biopsy, so you may find it helpful to bring someone with you.

Are there any risks or adverse effects?

It is normal to get some bruising. You may even notice some swelling or a lump at the biopsy site. This can take a week or two to completely settle.

You may feel aching or discomfort after the local anaesthetic has worn off. Simple painkillers should suffice, but avoid taking aspirin for pain relief as this may make any bruising worse.

Occasionally, because a larger biopsy sample has been obtained, skin indentation/dimpling can occur at the site of the biopsy.

Very occasionally the skin may tear, and it may be necessary to place stitches at the biopsy site.

As with any procedure where needles are inserted into the body, there is a very small risk of introducing infection.

Visiting times and contact details

If you need to contact us about your appointment please call;

Breast Screening Suite

St. James's University Hospital

0113 206 4959

Mon - Fri 8am-5pm



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