

Having a Mammogram and Stereotactic Vacuum assisted core biopsy

What is a Mammogram and stereotactic vacuum assisted core biopsy?

A mammogram is a special form of X-ray used on breast tissue. It's recommended as a diagnostic tool for detecting breast cancer in women over the age of 40.

A Stereotactic Vacuum assisted core biopsy is performed when an area of concern can only be seen on a mammogram. In these cases, the imaging acquired by the mammography equipment and a computer are used to guide the biopsy needle to the exact location.

Several small tissue samples are removed and sent to Pathology, where they will be assessed under a microscope to see if the tissue is normal or abnormal.

What should I expect during the procedure?

Before the procedure starts, a member of the team will take your blood pressure to check if the procedure can go ahead.

The biopsy is usually performed with you either sitting down or lying on your side. The Mammographer will position you in the mammogram machine and take an image to confirm the exact location for biopsy.

You will remain in that position with your breast compressed whilst the biopsy is performed. It is important that you keep as still as possible.

The area is cleaned before an injection of local anaesthetic is given to numb the area. This may sting for a few seconds, once the area is numb a needle will be advanced into the breast and several tissue samples will be taken using a vacuum biopsy system. A needle will make a small cut in the skin and in most cases is inserted only once into the breast. A small suction unit is then attached and used to remove the breast tissue sample.

The needle we use to take the biopsy tissue makes a small noise, but most patients report that this does not cause them any particular discomfort

After all samples are taken, a small metal marker clip will be inserted into your breast at the area of biopsy for future radiological referencing.

Immediately after the procedure, we will apply firm pressure to the breast for 10 minutes. This will help to minimise the risk of developing internal bruising in the breast (haematoma). A paper stitch (steristrip) and a sterile dressing will be placed over the small cut in the skin and on some occasions a pressure bandage will also be applied. Once you are dressed, we will move you to another area within the department where you will stay for about 30 minutes until we are sure you feel comfortable enough to leave the department.

How long will it take?

The stereotactic vacuum assisted core biopsy should take no longer than 45-60 minutes.

Why would I need this procedure?

This procedure is usually required when a Radiologist has seen an area of abnormality on a mammogram that can't be felt in a physical exam or seen on ultrasound or MRI.

What are the symptoms that have led to me having this procedure?

This procedure will be requested if an abnormality has been detected on your Imaging.

What are the alternatives?

There are no alternative methods available in most cases.

What are the potential risks and side effects?

The mammogram machine uses a small amount of radiation to produce the images. However, this has been taken into account and you have been sent this appointment because the breast team feels that this is the best test to investigate your condition.

Possible side effects of this procedure are:

- Pain at the site of the biopsy once the local anaesthetic has worn off, approximately one hour after the biopsy. Take your usual pain relief (**not aspirin**). A comfortable, soft bra may help.
- Internal bruising (haematoma) at the site of the biopsy
- Bleeding. If the wound starts to bleed, sit down and apply firm pressure with the tips of your fingers for 10 minutes. If bleeding continues contact the hospital using the contact details below or go to A&E.
- Infection of the wound site. The wound will be covered with a sterile dressing after the procedure and we will advise you how to look after the area to minimise the risk of infection.

What are the expected benefits of treatment?

A stereotactic vacuum assisted core biopsy allows a diagnosis to be made. It is a minimally invasive procedure, which is generally very safe. The benefits are considered to outweigh the risks.

What should I do before I come into hospital?

You will need to contact us before your appointment

Tel: 0300 131 4500 ext 771832 if;

- You are taking any medication to thin your blood
- If you have a blood clotting disorder.
- If you have high blood pressure (hypertension)

You must not fast. Please make sure you have a normal breakfast and drink plenty of water before your appointment.

What should I do when I go home?

You will need to avoid any strenuous activity for the next 24 hours such as exercise and lifting heavy objects.

Keep the dressing dry for 2 days. You can remove it after 5 days.

Avoid using any perfumed products on the biopsy site e.g. soap, deodorant until the incision site has healed.

Will I have to come back to hospital?

You may be required to visit the hospital for your results. It may take 2 – 3 weeks after the biopsy to obtain these results and at times could possibly take longer.

Occasionally the result is inconclusive, and the biopsy has to be repeated.

Consent

Although you consent for this treatment and will be asked to sign a consent form you can withdraw this consent at any time. Please discuss this with your medical team.

Sources of information

If you have concerns following your biopsy you can contact the breast care team on: 0300 131 4833 ext. 734833

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the patient experience team on 0300 131 4784 or esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net.

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Dr Ulle Raudsepp, Radiologist, Radiology EDGH.

Specialty/Unit that have agreed this patient information leaflet: Core Services

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Responsible clinician/author: Louise Richards, Clinical Modality Manager and Lauren Head, Interventional Mammographer / Deputy Modality Manager.

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