

Parkside Breast Imaging

Core Biopsy

Introduction

This leaflet provides information about having a ultrasound guided core biopsy of the breast. It explains the benefits and risks of the procedure as well as what you can expect when you come to the radiology department.

What is an ultrasound scan of the breast?

An ultrasound guided core biopsy of the breast is a procedure in which a small sample of tissue is removed from the breast using a specialist biopsy needle, so that it can be examined under a microscope. An ultrasound machine is used to identify the area of the breast that requires examination and to guide the needle to the correct position for the procedure to take place.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be greeted by either or both a clinical imaging assistant and a radiographer.

The procedure should last 15-40 minutes and is carried out in an ultrasound room. You should be prepared, however, to be in the department for longer in case delays occur or in case you wish to take time to rest and recover after the procedure.

You will be asked to undress to the waist and put a gown on. You will be invited into the ultrasound room and to lie on the examination couch.

An ultrasound scan of the breast will be performed initially to locate the area that needs to be sampled. The Consultant Radiologist will then clean the area of the breast that is going to be examined, before injecting the local anesthetic to numb the area.

Once the area is numb a very small cut is made

(around 3-4mm width), through which the biopsy needle is inserted into the breast. The ultrasound machine is used to guide the needle into the correct position. The spring-loaded biopsy needle is passed quickly into the breast producing a clicking noise as it does so. A narrow core of tissue is taken up into the needle before the needle is removed from the breast and the specimen removed from the needle. This process may be repeated two to four times.

Once adequate samples have been obtained and the procedure is finished, firm compression will then be applied. This is to help reduce the risk of bruising. A paper stitch (Steri-Strip) will be placed over the puncture site and covered with a waterproof dressing. Written and verbal instructions will be given regarding your aftercare.

You may then get dressed, however we recommend that you take some refreshments and rest for a while before leaving.





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What are the benefits? Why should I have this procedure?

If a mammogram or ultrasound scan detects a change in your breast, the Breast Consultant will require a cell sample (FNA) or tissue sample (biopsy) in order to identify what is causing the changes. These cell and tissue samples can be analysed under a microscope and the results can help confirm the diagnosis.

Core biopsies are performed by Consultant Radiologists who are specifically trained to perform these tests.

How can I prepare for a core biopsy?

There is no preparation for this procedure. You may eat and drink as normal before and after.

However:

Please inform the clinical staff if you are taking medicines (i.e. aspirin or clopidogrel) or any medicines that thin the blood (e.g. warfarin)

If you have any questions, please phone 020 8971 8025 ext. 8470/8477 for advice as soon as you get your appointment letter.

If you're allergic to any medications, please call us on 020 8971 8025 ext. 8470/8477.

What are the risks?

Occasionally, there may be some bleeding inside the breast which may result in a bruise or swelling (haematoma). Care is taken during the procedure to minimise the risk of infection. Care is also taken that the needle does not pass beyond the breast tissue through to the chest wall. This is especially important if a lump is situated at the back of a small breast. There is also the possibility of failure to obtain sufficient sampling or diagnosing a coincidental change which will not do you any harm, but may be recommended for excision as a precaution.

Are there any alternatives?

An alternative test, called a diagnostic excision biopsy, may be offered to you. An excision biopsy would be performed in an operating theatre under general anaesthesia. This is also to remove a sample of breast tissue where changes have been detected. In addition the surgeon will remove a small rim of normal tissue around this area, called a margin. This procedure will leave a scar and the recovery time is longer.

On the day of your appointment

Please do not wear deodorant, powder, lotion or perfume on your breasts and underarm areas as this may affect the accuracy of your results.

You may wish to bring a friend or relative with you for support.





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Will I feel any pain?

During the procedure the local anaesthesia may cause some stinging before numbing the breast tissue, but this should only last for a few seconds. You may feel some pressure on the breast during the procedure but you should not feel any pain. If you do feel pain tell the Radiologists and more local anaesthesia will be introduced to the breast.

The local anaesthesia will wear off after two to three hours. If you then find your breast uncomfortable or painful you may take a mild painkiller, such as a paracetamol. Avoid taking ibuprofen or medication that contains aspirin as these could cause extra bruising in the breast.

What do I need to do after I go home?

You may go back to normal activity straight away, though avoid any strenuous exertion, such as heavy lifting, jogging or aerobics for the rest of the day. If your work is physical, we advise light duties only for the rest of the day, then back to normal duties the following day.

If you have been asked to stop taking any anti-platelets or blood thinning medications, the Consultant Radiologist/Radiographer will discuss this with you before you go home. If you have any further questions about your medication after your procedure, phone 020 8971 8025 ext. 8470/8477. Take any other normal medications as prescribed unless you have been advised otherwise.

The dressing needs to be kept on the breast for three days, after which it can be removed and no further dressings are required on the puncture site. You can shower and bathe as normal whilst the dressing is on as it is waterproof.





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What should I do if I have a problem?

You may notice some bruising at the puncture site. This is to be expected after a biopsy and will subside over the next week or so.

Bleeding or swelling is rare but if it does happen please follow these instructions:

- Remove the plaster from the puncture site
- Cover the biopsy site with tissues, a paper kitchen towel or a clean tea towel and apply pressure to the breast over the biopsy site with the flat of your hand for 15 minutes in the same way as was done straight after your biopsy.
- If the bleeding or swelling continues after 15 minutes you should attend your local A&E department.

This leaflet is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

