



# Breast Core Biopsy

## Patient Information

### What is a Breast Core Biopsy?

A Breast Core Biopsy is where a special needle (or probe) is inserted into the breast to take a small sample of breast tissue from an area of concern so that it can be sent to a laboratory for testing. It is done using local anaesthetic to numb the breast in the area that is being biopsied. An abnormality may have been identified on a scan or X-ray image or may have been felt as a lump.

If the abnormality in the breast cannot be felt as a lump, the radiologist or other specialist doctor performing the biopsy will insert the needle (or probe) using guidance from ultrasound or mammogram images or pictures. This ensures the tissue sample is taken from the area where the abnormality has been identified.

### How do I prepare for a Breast Core Biopsy?

Generally no preparation is needed. You should bring any recent breast imaging (mammograms and/or ultrasounds) and reports for the doctor performing the procedure to review before doing the biopsy. It is advisable to have someone drive you home afterwards.

Do not wear talcum powder or deodorant on the day of the biopsy as these can mimic or imitate calcium spots in the breast which makes it harder for the radiologist to identify the abnormality that requires biopsy. You might consider the clothes you wear on the day so you only need to remove clothes from the upper part of your body.

### What happens during a Breast Core Biopsy?

The skin of the breast is washed with antiseptic and then a very fine needle is used to give local anaesthetic to numb the breast in the area for biopsy. The local anaesthetic stings for only a few seconds when it is being given, and after this the area will be numb.

A small nick or cut is made in the skin and the biopsy needle is gently inserted into the breast. Several samples are taken. When each sample is taken there is a clicking noise, and you may have a feeling of pressure in the breast where the sample is taken. The biopsy procedure may sometimes feel uncomfortable but is not usually painful because of the local anaesthetic that has been given.

After the samples have been taken, the biopsy area will be pressed on firmly for a few minutes to reduce bruising and bleeding, and then covered with a dressing.

### Are there any after effects of a Breast Core Biopsy?

The area that has been biopsied may feel a little tender for several days and there is usually some bruising. If the biopsy area is painful you can take paracetamol. Aspirin is not recommended because it thins the blood and can increase bruising or bleeding at the biopsy site. You should avoid vigorous physical exercise or heavy lifting for 24 hours after the procedure as this may make the bruising worse.

The small nick or cut that was made for the biopsy usually heals over in a few days and you will have a tiny scar less than 5mm in size that will be barely visible once healed.

### How long does a Breast Core Biopsy take?

The time taken for the procedure varies according to how the biopsy is done. For example, an ultrasound guided core biopsy may take only 20 minutes. A mammographic guided core biopsy (also called a "stereotactic") may take up to an hour.

### What are the risks of a Breast Core Biopsy?

You will usually have some bruising at the biopsy site and sometimes this may take several weeks to disappear.

There is a very small risk of infection. In the very unlikely event that the biopsy site becomes infected, a course of antibiotics may be required from your doctor.

Contact your doctor if you experience excessive swelling, bleeding, have fluid draining from the wound, redness or heat in the breast after the biopsy.

Doing a biopsy of tissue, especially if it is located deep within the breast, carries a slight risk that the needle (or probe) will pass through the chest wall, allowing air around the lung that could collapse a lung. This complication is a rare occurrence and is called a pneumothorax.

### What are the benefits of a Breast Core Biopsy?

A Breast Core Biopsy is a way of getting accurate information without needing an operation to surgically remove the tissue for testing.

### Who does the Breast Core Biopsy?

A Breast Core Biopsy is performed by a radiologist (an experienced specialist doctor). If the area of concern cannot be felt as a lump then the core biopsy is done using ultrasound or mammography to guide the biopsy needle into the correct position.

### How do I get my results?

Your doctor will receive a written report on your test as soon as is practicable.

**It is very important that you discuss the results with the doctor whom referred you so that they can explain what the results mean for you.**

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