



Having a Breast Biopsy

Information for Patients

This leaflet tells you about having a breast biopsy. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor, but can act as a starting point for such discussions. If you have any questions about the procedure please ask the doctor who has referred you for the test or contact a member of the radiology team on the number below. (0131 5371622)

What is a breast biopsy?

A biopsy is a way of taking a small sample of tissue out of your breast, using a special needle. This allows us to look at the sample under a microscope to find out what it is. This may help in your diagnosis and treatment.

Why do I need a biopsy?

Other tests, such as an ultrasound scan or a mammogram, may show that there is an area of abnormal tissue in your breast. From the scan, it is not possible to say exactly what the abnormality is due to, and therefore the way to find out is by taking a small piece of tissue to look at under a microscope. Often several samples will be taken from the area.

What are the alternatives?

There is no alternative procedure that will provide the required information.

What does the procedure involve?

US Guided Breast Biopsy

You will be asked to remove your clothes down to your waist and lie on a couch. The skin over the area of the biopsy will be cleaned with a sterilising solution and a local anaesthetic will be injected into the skin to numb the area.

A biopsy needle will then be positioned by the radiologist/sonographer using the ultrasound to ensure it is in the correct place. You will be aware of a loud clicking noise as each sample is taken. Several samples will be obtained.

At the end of the procedure firm pressure will be applied by the helper for up to 15 minutes. Paper stitches (steri-strips) are then placed over the puncture site and a dressing placed over the area. You will be given a written after-care sheet. Then you will be allowed home.

Stereotactic guided Breast biopsy

You will be asked to remove your clothes down to your waist and sit or lie on a chair in front of the x-ray machine. The radiographer will then position your breast which will be held gently in place.

The skin over the area of the biopsy will be cleaned with a sterilising solution and a local anaesthetic will be injected into the skin to numb the area.

A biopsy needle will then be positioned by the radiologist using the x-ray machine to ensure it is in the correct place. You will be aware of a whirring noise as each sample is taken. Several samples will be obtained.

At the end of the procedure firm pressure will be applied by the helper for up to 15 minutes. Paper stitches (steri-strips) are then placed over the puncture site and a dressing placed over the area. You will be given a written after-care sheet. Then you will be allowed home.

Radiological clip or marker

Often a tiny titanium clip is placed into the breast at the end of the procedure. This is helpful if the area biopsied needs to be located again. It will not do you any harm

How do I prepare for the biopsy?

You should inform the radiologist if you are taking any medication which might increase your tendency to bleed after the biopsy, these include, warfarin, rivoroxiban, apixiban, clopidogrel (Plavix), or heparin injections, or if you have a medical condition which makes it difficult for your blood to clot normally. We may need to alter your medication dose or test your blood before the biopsy is done.

On the day of your appointment **do not** wear deodorant, powder or creams on your breasts or underarm areas, as these can affect the accuracy of your results. Please tell the staff if you have any allergies. No other particular preparation is required.

Will it hurt?

When the local anaesthetic is injected, it will sting for a short while, but this soon wears off. After this you should not feel any pain. You may feel pressure but no sharpness. If you do feel sharpness or pain, please tell the radiologist who can give you more local anaesthetic.

What are the risks of a breast biopsy?

These may include:

1. Pain / discomfort at the biopsy site after the local anaesthetic has worn off usually in 1-2 hours. Taking simple pain killers such as paracetamol (not aspirin) can help with this or wearing a soft bra.
2. Bruising – this can cause swelling and the lump can appear to get bigger -this usually settles by itself.
3. Bleeding – should the wound start to bleed apply pressure for 10 minutes. If the bleeding continues contact your GP, accident and emergency department or NHS 24.
4. Infection- There is a very small risk of infection. If the area becomes red or swollen after the procedure contact your GP.
5. Scar- a tiny nick is made in the skin of no more than 2-3mm. This can leave a small scar on the surface of the skin.
6. Occasionally not enough tissue is obtained and the procedure needs to be repeated. This will be discussed with you at the time of your results appointment.
7. Extremely rarely the needle can pass through the chest wall which can cause injury to the lining of the lung - particularly when the lesion lies at the back of a small breast. This has the potential to cause collapse of the lung (pneumothorax) Care is taken to avoid this by using image guidance

What do I need to do after I go home?

Normal activities can be resumed straight away however we advise you to not partake in any strenuous activity such as heavy lifting, housework or sports for the next 24-48hours. If your work is physical we advise light duties only for the next 24-48 hours.

Take normal medication as prescribed unless you have been advised otherwise.

Please refer to the aftercare sheet given to you after the procedure for more information.

How do I get the results?

Usually you will be given an appointment for 1 to 2 weeks time with the consultant looking after your care. Occasionally you will be phoned or sent a letter with the results. This will be organised and discussed with you before you leave the department.

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet, but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with us in the radiology department. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure. If you wish to discuss anything further, please contact us.

Keeping your Appointment If you cannot keep your appointment, or have been given one that is unsuitable, please change it by phoning the number on your appointment letter. Your call will give someone else the chance to be seen and will help us keep waiting times to a minimum.

Public Transport and Travel Information Bus details available from: Lothian Buses on 0131 555 6363 www.lothianbuses.co.uk
Traveline Scotland on 08712002233 or www.travelinescotland.com Train details available from: National Rail Enquiries on 03457 484 950 or www.nationalrail.co.uk

Patient Transport Patient Transport will only be made available if you have a medical/clinical need. Telephone **0300 123 1236** *calls charged at local rate up to 28 days in advance to book, making sure you have your CHI Number available. Hard of hearing or speech impaired? Use text relay: **18001-0300 123 1236*** (calls charged at local rate). To cancel patient transport, telephone 0800 389 1333 (Freephone 24 hour answer service).

Interpretation and Translation

Your GP will inform us of any interpreting requirements you have before you come to hospital and we will provide an appropriate interpreter. If you are having this procedure as an existing in patient, staff will arrange interpreting support for you in advance of this procedure. This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language.

Contact Information

Radiology Department
Western General Hospital
Edinburgh
Telephone: 0131 5371622
Mon-Friday 8.30am-4pm