



SER Information Sheet:

Breast core Biopsy

What is a Breast Core Biopsy?

A Breast Core Biopsy is where a special needle 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 pathologist for testing. The pathology report will be sent to your referring doctor who will then convey these results to you.

What are the benefits of a core Biopsy?

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

How do I prepare for a core Biopsy?

Generally, no preparation is needed. You should bring any recent breast imaging (mammograms and/or ultrasounds) and reports for the Radiologist performing the procedure to review before doing the biopsy.

Do not wear talcum powder 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.

When you make your appointment for the breast core biopsy, you need to let our staff know if you are taking any blood thinning medication, such as aspirin, warfarin, clopidogrel, dabigatran, prasugrel, dipyridamole or asasantin. Blood thinning medications may need to be stopped for a period of days, or your normal dose reduced, before this procedure is carried out. It is very important that you do not stop any of these medications or change the dose without consulting both our radiology clinic or your own doctor. They will give you specific instructions about when to stop and restart.

It is advisable to have someone drive you home afterwards.

Who does the Procedure?

The Breast Core Biopsy is performed by the **radiologist** and will use either ultrasound, or CT scanner to guide the needle into the joint. The radiologist will be accompanied by a radiographer, or sonographer, depending on the equipment used.



What happens during a Biopsy and how long will it take?

You will be called through for the biopsy by the Sonographer or Mammographer. The procedure will be explained to you and consent will be obtained. The area of concern is identified either by ultrasound or mammogram for stereotactic biopsy

The area is then clean with antiseptic and injected with local anaesthetic. A small 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 made by the biopsy device. 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.

The time taken for the procedure varies according to how the biopsy is done. An ultrasound guided core biopsy may take only 20-30 minutes. A mammographic guided core biopsy (also called a "stereotactic") may take up to an hour, due to the positioning required in the Mammography unit.

After Effects and Post Procedure Care

Unfortunately, although we try to avoid all complications, some discomfort and tenderness will follow a core biopsy. Immediately following the biopsy we will apply pressure for several minutes in order to minimise bruising. A dressing will be applied which should be kept in place for two days. This dressing is waterproof and you can wash with this on.

Following a core biopsy, steristrips may also be applied which will help to avoid a scar. Try to avoid strenuous exercise for 24 hours following the biopsy. Heavy weights should be particularly avoided.

After the procedure, you are likely to feel minor discomfort for two to three days. It is recommended that you use an ice pack on the site to help reduce pain and inflammation. If you feel discomfort taking Paracetamol can be taken to assist in easing the pain. However please avoid Aspirin and Nurofen, as this has a blood thinning effect and may increase bruising. It is common for bruising to appear at the site of the biopsy and usually resolves in one to two weeks.



Are there risks with a breast core biopsy?

As stated 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 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.

How do I find out the results?

As stated 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.

A written report of the procedure will be given to your doctor by our radiologist. A written report will be sent to your doctor by the pathology company used to analyse the core tissue samples, indicating the pathology findings.