

Patient advice sheet

Core biopsy of breast and/or Axilla

What is a core biopsy?

Core biopsy is a safe and simple method of obtaining a non-surgical diagnosis of breast lesions. It is performed using local anaesthetic and with ultrasound or x-ray guidance (stereotactic biopsy). A small skin incision is made to allow insertion of the biopsy needle. Normally between 3 and 10 samples of tissue will be obtained to provide enough tissue for the pathologist to make a diagnosis.

Often it is necessary to insert a small tissue marker at the site of biopsy to mark the area from where the samples have been taken. The clinician will explain this to you and ask for your consent if a tissue marker is required.

If you take Warfarin or other medication to thin your blood this procedure may not be suitable for you whilst you are on this medication. We may arrange for your medication to be stopped for a few days prior to the biopsy. Please contact us on 01494 323300 as soon as you receive your appointment for a biopsy so that we can advise you.

What are the possible complications?

This procedure is usually complication free but may be associated with:

- Some pain either during or after the procedure. This pain may be in the breast or in the armpit.
- Some bruising (haematoma) of the breast.

After care advice:

- Pressure will be applied to the area after the procedure to reduce the chance of bruising. A dressing will be put on and you should keep this on for 24 hours. If further bleeding occurs after leaving the department, apply firm pressure to the area for about 10 minutes.
- Bruising is common and may stay for a couple of weeks. Avoid exercising the arm of the side of the biopsy for 24 hours to minimise bruising and please keep the area dry.
- You may experience mild pain or discomfort as the local anaesthetic effect wears off. We suggest you take some of your normal pain relief tablets if required. Paracetamol is preferred to Ibuprofen.

WARNING: In the unlikely event that you experience excessive bleeding, or the breast swells appreciably, please apply firm compression to the area for at least 10 minutes. You can contact the Breast Unit for advice on 01494 323300, weekdays between the hours of 9am and 4.30pm. Outside these hours please visit an A&E department and tell them that you have had a core biopsy of the breast or axilla. Please take this leaflet with you.

RESULTS: Please attend on.....

We hope this leaflet will help you to understand about a core breast/axilla biopsy. If you have any more questions, please contact the Breast Unit. The staff will be happy to answer your questions.

Breast Unit Office: 01494 323300

Our telephone lines are open every weekday from 9.00am until 4.30pm

Email: buc-tr.bsu@nhs.net

Breast Screening Breast Care Nurse: 01494 426109

Breast Care Nurses: 01494 426228

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

Patient Advice Sheet

If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in large print or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 831120 or email bht.pals@nhs.net