Ultrasound-guided vacuum assisted breast excision biopsy

Information for you

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Why have I been offered this procedure?

You will have been informed that there is an indeterminate lesion in your breast. This means that there are no signs of cancer in the biopsies already taken, but the lesion in your breast may be linked with increased risk of developing cancer.

You are being offered this procedure in order to get a sample of tissue from the area of interest. This is to see whether or not there is any more suspicious or cancerous tissue in order to help with further follow up treatment. In the past, indeterminate breast lesions would have been removed by an open surgery procedure which required admission, general anaesthesia and an incision (cut) in the breast. However, a newer technique is now available at Crosshouse Hospital which can be offered to certain patients. Vacuum assisted excision biopsy does not require admission to hospital, general anaesthesia or open surgery.

In order that you can make an informed choice about whether to undergo a vacuum assisted excision biopsy procedure, the following information is included for you to read before your appointment. Please read it and feel free to contact us if you have any queries.

What is a vacuum assisted excision biopsy?

Image guided vacuum assisted excision biopsy is a non-surgical procedure that can be used to remove or sample non-cancerous lesions in the breast. A needle attached
to a vacuum device is inserted into the breast and gentle suction is used to get a sample of the lesion

**What does the procedure involve?**

The procedure is carried out in the ultrasound clinic room with you lying down. It is important to get you into a good position and have a clear image of the breast.

The skin of your breast will be prepared with an antiseptic fluid. You will then be given an injection of local anaesthetic into the area of the breast to be biopsied. This will make the area numb. You should not feel anything sharp or painful but you will be aware of dull sensations of the specialist working at your breast. Once the area is numbed, a very small cut is made in the skin and the biopsy needle is passed through this into the area to be biopsied. The biopsy is then taken and you will hear the machine working during this time. Usually several small samples will be taken.

After we are happy with the biopsied tissue we will finish the procedure. A small marker thread will be placed inside the breast at the area of the biopsy. This is a very small metal thread which stays inside the breast to mark the exact area biopsied. It can stay in the breast for life if your biopsy result is benign and it will not cause any symptoms. It will not cause any problems with MRI scanners or airport/other metal detectors. If the biopsy results show something which needs treatment, we can target that treatment using the marker for guidance.
We will then make you comfortable and put a dressing over the small nick in your skin. We will press on your breast for several minutes following the procedure to help minimise any bruising.

**Who will perform the biopsy?**

Your biopsy will be carried out by a consultant radiologist (specialist doctor) or a clinical specialist radiographer.

All staff performing excision biopsies are checked regularly to make sure that their work is carried out to a high standard.

There are usually two radiographers and at least one nurse in the room during the procedure. Each member of staff has their own specific duties.

**What happens afterwards?**

A small dressing will be put on the nick in your skin and you are free to go home straight after the procedure. You can carry on with most daily activities such as driving but please avoid activities which could cause harm to the area as this could cause further bruising.

**What are the benefits of vacuum assisted excision biopsy?**

It is important to find out whether indeterminate lesions in the breast can be left alone, or whether they need monitoring or further treatment with surgery.
Will it hurt?
There is a mild stinging sensation for a few seconds as the local anaesthetic is injected, after that the procedure should be painless. The specialist will check that the area is numb before taking the biopsy.

What are the risks of vacuum assisted excision biopsy?
Breast excision biopsy is a very low risk procedure, but as with any medical procedure, there are some potential risks to inform you of:

• You may experience some bleeding or bruising. This is usually minor and we minimise this by pressing on the biopsied area for several minutes after biopsies are taken.

• Aching or tenderness. You can take over the counter painkillers such as paracetamol to help with the discomfort.

• There is a small risk of infection because we are going through the skin. We minimise this by using a clean technique and sterile instruments.

• There is a very small risk (less than one in 10,000) that the biopsy needle could go into the wrong place such as the chest wall or lung. We minimise this risk by using imaging to carefully guide the biopsy device into the correct area.
• There is a small risk that we may not obtain enough tissue for diagnosis and you may need another biopsy or surgery to complete your assessment.

**When will I get the results?**
The results usually take seven to ten days to process. You will be given a return appointment to receive and discuss the results of your excision biopsy.

**How should I prepare for the test?**
You do not need to prepare in any way for the test other than to avoid using underarm deodorant on the day of your appointment. Please tell staff before the day of your appointment if you are on any blood thinning medication.

**Can I refuse the excision biopsy?**
Yes you can. Please discuss any concerns you have with your consultant before making your decision. You can refuse the procedure or request for the procedure to be stopped at any time.
Contact details:
X Ray Department – 01563 827114
Ms Tovey Secretary – Ext 25235
Ms Reid Secretary – Ext 27871
Ms Elgammal Secretary – Ext 26860

Just ask!
We hope that this information has helped you understand more about your stereotactic vacuum assisted biopsy. If you have any further questions, please ask a member of staff.
We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print.

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Call: 01563 825856
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