

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Therapeutic vacuum excision of breast lesion using ultrasound guidance

What will this procedure involve and how will it help?

We have found an area of abnormality in your breast, and we would like to perform a further procedure under ultrasound guidance (rather than a surgical operation under general anaesthetic) guided by the result of your previous tests. Either:

- a) You would like the area to be removed, or
- b) We would like to remove this area, as recommended by national guidelines, to take more tissue so it can be looked at further in the pathology laboratory.

What is it?

This is a special technique to take more small samples of breast tissue for further examination. The area in your breast is seen using the mammography machine.

At the end of the procedure, we will insert a tiny piece of metal, called a clip, to mark the biopsy area. If you have had a biopsy before, the previous clip (or marker) will be removed.

A marker is inserted in case you need any further tests or surgery after we have received your results; it helps us when you return for any further breast imaging.

X-rays will be taken after your procedure to make sure the previous clip has been removed and the new clip is in place.

This marker can stay in your breast and will give you no problems, for example during any MRI scans or metal-detector systems.

Who will perform my procedure?

This will be done by an expert clinician/advanced practitioner.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be asked to remove the top half of your clothing and then lie on a couch. You will be required to stay in this position throughout the procedure.

If you are known to be allergic to anaesthetic, if you have a bleeding or clotting blood disorder, or if you are taking any anticoagulants (blood thinning tablets) you should let the doctor know before having the procedure.

After local anaesthetic is given to numb the area, a small cut is made to the skin.

A needle connected to a vacuum device is placed through this. Using ultrasound as a guide, breast tissue is sucked through the probe by the vacuum into a connecting chamber. This enables the removal of several tissue samples without having to remove the probe.

These samples are sent to the laboratory, where they are examined under a microscope to confirm diagnosis.

Is it painful and how long does it last?

The local anaesthetic may sting for a few moments but then you should feel nothing. Please mention to the doctor if you feel any discomfort as you may require some more anaesthetic.

The examination usually takes about half an hour.

Risks and benefits

The main benefit is removal of a lesion without open surgery or a general anaesthetic. This will also confirm diagnosis and guide any further treatment.

Most commonly after this procedure, you might experience some bruising or bleeding around the area. We try to reduce this by applying some hand pressure at the time.

If the wound starts to bleed again, apply firm pressure for several minutes. More severe side effects or problems such as infection are extremely rare.

Can I have someone with me?

Yes, but they cannot accompany you for any x-rays taken after the procedure due to radiation exposure.

After the procedure

A small dressing will be applied to your breast; this may include thin adhesive strips to help the wound closed.

The dressing can be removed after 24 hours but it is advisable to keep any adhesive strips in place for three or four days.

If you experience any pain and/or discomfort, we advise that you take a mild pain killer such as paracetamol. Avoid aspirin as this could encourage bleeding.

You may eat and drink as normal following this procedure. You can leave hospital shortly after the procedure once this has been agreed by the doctor treating you. Usually, you can get back to your normal activities immediately following the procedure.

You should contact your GP or the Breast Care Clinic if you experience swelling, bleeding or inflammation in the breast.

When will I get the result?

We aim to get the result of this test ready for you within a week to 10 days. We will arrange an appointment with you to get these results before you leave the clinic.

Depending on the results you may need further procedures or mammographic follow up.

Contact details

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information or advice:

Breast Care Clinic 14
Telephone: 01623 622515, extension 3513.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet (if relevant) please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202409-04-TVEB
Created: May 2019 / Revised: September 2024 /
Review Date: September 2026