



York and Scarborough
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Stereotactic Vacuum Assisted Core Biopsy

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

The Breast Imaging Unit

York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Telephone: 01904 725591

yhs-tr.northyorkshire.breastscreeningservice@nhs.net

What is vacuum assisted core biopsy?

A vacuum assisted core biopsy is a procedure used to take small samples (biopsies) of tissue from the breast for testing.

Why do I need a vacuum assisted core biopsy?

A vacuum assisted core biopsy takes more tissue than a standard needle biopsy. This is particularly helpful for diagnosing areas in the breast where no lump can be felt (often detected by mammogram screening) or where a previous needle biopsy has not given a clear result.

How is the vacuum assisted core biopsy performed?

The first part of the vacuum assisted procedure is like having a mammogram except you will be lying or sitting down instead of standing up. X-rays are taken to check the position of the area to be sampled and you will be asked to keep still in the correct position with your breast held in place for about 20 minutes. Occasionally it may be more appropriate to do this procedure with ultrasound guidance instead of x-ray, this will be decided by a consultant.

The area to be biopsied will be numbed using local anaesthetic injected into your skin. When the area is numb a small cut will be made in the skin. A biopsy needle is placed through the cut in the breast tissue and guided to the correct area with the help of the x-ray imaging. When it is in position, samples of the breast tissue can be taken, these are biopsies. Several biopsies may be taken in this way without the need to remove the needle.

When sufficient samples have been obtained the biopsy needle will be removed and pressure will be applied to the biopsy site for 10 minutes to prevent/reduce bleeding. A small dressing is applied with no need for any stitches.

After this procedure it is sometimes necessary to mark the area sampled for future mammograms using a small titanium marker. If this is necessary, you will be told at the time of the biopsy.

How long will the examination take

The procedure usually takes approximately 20 minutes, but please allow one hour for the whole appointment. There is a waiting area available for anyone who may wish to accompany you.

What should I wear?

It is a good idea to wear skirt or trousers and top as you will be asked to undress to the waist.

Will it hurt?

The local anaesthetic may sting slightly as it is injected but the area quickly becomes numb. Most patients will feel pressure in the biopsied area but not pain. Occasionally some patients feel pain in the breast during the procedure, in which case further local anaesthetic can be inserted.

Are there any risks associated with the procedure?

The risks associated are bleeding and bruising. Before you leave the Breast Unit a member of staff will check your dressing to ensure there is no bleeding. Discomfort often persists for a few days after the biopsy. Bruising and/or lumpiness will take longer to disappear as the area heals.

This procedure uses a small dose of X ray radiation, which very slightly increases lifetime cancer risk. However, NHS machines use low doses, and the benefits outweigh the risks.

What instructions should I follow after the biopsy?

You will receive a leaflet with instructions for your biopsy aftercare. Most women feel fine after the procedure and return to their normal routine. We recommend that you wear a bra to help support the breast for 48 hours following the examination and that strenuous activity/exercise and heavy lifting is avoided for at least 24 hours.

When can I expect the results of my biopsy?

The tissue samples are sent to the laboratory where a Pathologist will look at it under a microscope. Results will be discussed with members of the Multidisciplinary Breast Team and a result will be available to you within 5-12 working days. You will receive further information regarding this when you attend for your appointment.

What if I have any further questions?

Please contact the Specialist Breast Care Nurses on 01904 726775 if you have any questions or concerns before or after your appointment.

The biopsy will be performed by a specialist team who will be able to answer any questions during the procedure.

What if I am unable to attend this appointment?

Please telephone the Breast Imaging Unit on 01904 725592 as soon as possible so that the appointment can be re-arranged.

yhs-tr.northyorkshire.breastscreeningservice@nhs.net

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: The Breast Imaging Unit, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 725591.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:
www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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