

DEPARTMENT OF RADIOLOGY
QEII Hospital
Vicki Adkins Breast Unit

Fine Needle Aspiration
Or Core Biopsy of the Breast
using Ultrasound

The Breast Imaging Department

The Breast Imaging Department is a division of the Radiology Department, which carries out radiological examinations of patients using X-rays and Ultrasound. There is a multidisciplinary team of people working in the radiology Department comprised of radiologists (doctors who have been specially trained in Radiology), Radiographers, Nurses, Assistant Practitioners, Radiology Department Assistants and Clerical Staff.

What is a Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA) or Core Biopsy of the Breast using Ultrasound?

A fine needle aspiration is a method to collect fluid or a few cells so that they can be examined under a microscope.

An FNA is a way of taking a few cells from an abnormal area, whereas a core biopsy takes a larger specimen of tissue. The specimen collected can then be examined under a microscope.

Are there any risks from the procedure?

Occasionally there may be some bleeding inside the breast and a bruise or swelling (haematoma) will form.

What are the benefits?

- The benefits from making a diagnosis and consequently giving you the right treatment outweigh any small risks involved. The risk to your health from not having the examination and missing a serious disorder may be much greater.
- These procedures are minimally invasive methods of obtaining tissue samples and may save you from having a more major procedure.

Are there any precautions?

Please inform this department **before** you come for your examination:

- If you are, or think you may be pregnant
- If you have breast implants
- If you are taking tablets to thin the blood (anticoagulants), you should inform the Radiology Department. Please ring the telephone number on your appointment letter or tell the Radiologist when you arrive.

Preparations prior to the procedure

- You should wash your breasts before coming to the Breast Imaging Department.
- Please do not use talcum powder or deodorant.
- It is advisable to wear separates i.e. a skirt and top or trousers and top as you will need to undress from the waist upwards.

Can I bring a friend/relative?

Yes you may be accompanied, but friends and relatives are not usually allowed in the examination room. Due to the limited size of the waiting room we would be grateful if friends or relatives would use the waiting area in the Main reception of the Breast Unit.

When you arrive

Please go to the Reception Desk in the Vicki Adkins Breast Unit. You will be collected by a member of staff or a volunteer and shown to a cubicle. You will be given a gown and asked to undress from the waist upwards. A basket will be provided for your belongings – please keep this with you at all times. You will be taken to the examination room where the procedure will be explained to you.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be asked to lie on your back on the table and the Radiologist will scan the breast to locate the area.

FNA

Once the area has been located the surrounding skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and numbed using local anaesthetic. A small needle is then placed into the breast. Using a syringe attached to the needle, suction is applied to draw up fluid and cells. The needle is moved up and down through the breast tissue whilst this is happening. The needle is then removed and the sample placed in a special bottle or onto a microscope slide. The procedure may be repeated several times. After the procedure a small dressing will be placed over the area and it should be kept dry for 48 hours.

Core Biopsy

Once the area has been located the surrounding skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution and numbed using local anaesthetic. A small nick will be made in the skin to assist in placing the biopsy needle close to the area. The needle is attached to a small device or 'gun'. The device will direct the needle into the lump with a clicking noise and collects a narrow tubular core of tissue. The needle is then withdrawn from the breast and the specimen extracted from it. The process is repeated several times. After the procedure a small dressing will be placed over the area and it should be kept dry for 48 hours.

Will it hurt?

You may feel some stinging as the local anaesthetic goes in, but the area will soon go numb. During the actual procedure, you should not feel any discomfort. If a bruise or swelling forms afterwards, this may be uncomfortable for a day or two.

How long will it take?

The procedure usually takes approximately 30 minutes.

Are there any side effects?

You may experience some discomfort from the puncture site for 24 - 48 hours. You may wish to take a simple painkiller (e.g. paracetamol).

Do not take medication which contains aspirin as this may cause a larger bruise.

It may also help to wear a lightweight bra at night to support your breast after the procedure.

When will I get the results?

The specimen collected during the procedure will be sent to the pathology laboratory for analysis. The pathology report will be sent to your consultant and this normally takes 7 days.

If I have a query who should I contact?

If you have a query please ring the Radiology Department between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday, on 01707 325580

Public Transport

Please visit www.intalink.org.uk or phone 0300 123 4050 for details of bus and train routes, timetables and fares.

Health Shuttle

Door to door journeys to Lister can be booked on the Health Shuttle from certain areas. Please phone 01438 726219 for fares and details.

Feedback

The Radiology Department welcomes feedback on our service and our information leaflets.

Alternatively you may wish to contact the Patients Advice & Liaison Service.

Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

Tel no. 01438 284779 (Lister)

01707 229045 (QEII & HCH Hospitals)