

Wire localisation procedure

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A patient's guide



.... caring for you 

Why do I need this procedure?

Before you have your surgery the breast surgeon needs a guide to tell him / her the exact position of the abnormality to be removed.

What happens during this procedure?

This procedure can take place on the day or the day before your surgery depending on the time of your operation.

A fine wire is inserted into the breast abnormality under an x-ray or ultrasound guidance. The radiologist will decide which is the best approach for you.

How will this procedure be done?

If using ultrasound, you will be asked to lie down on the ultrasound couch, The breast will be numbed using a small needle and local anaesthetic. A needle containing a fine wire will then be inserted into the abnormal area using ultrasound guidance. Once in position the needle will be withdrawn and the wire will stay in position in the abnormal area. It cannot move.

If using x-ray guidance, your breast will be positioned in the mammogram machine. The breast will be numbed using a small needle and local anaesthetic.

A needle containing a fine wire will then be inserted into the abnormal area using –x-ray guidance. A number of pictures may be taken in order to get the best position. Once in position the needle will be withdrawn and the wire will stay in position in the abnormal areas. It cannot move.

What happens after the procedure?

A mammogram will be done to confirm the exact position of the wire for the surgeons to see in theatre. A dressing will then be applied to the area which must not be removed. If you are going home you should sleep in a soft bra.

You will be given a form to hand to the surgeon. It is important you bring this with you on the day if your surgery.

Are there any side effects?

The most common side effect is some discomfort as the anaesthetic is put in the breast. This normally only lasts for a few seconds. Women undergoing the procedure under x-ray guidance may experience discomfort whilst positioned in the mammogram machine. Some patients report discomfort once the wire is in the breast but this is rare.

Any further questions?

If you have any further questions please contact the breast care nurses.

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