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**Patient Transport:** This will only be made available if you have a medical/clinical need. Referrals are via GP, surgery, ward or other clinical areas within the Trust.

**Interpreting Service:** If you require an interpreter, please contact the Imaging Help Desk on 020 7288 5888 in advance to let us know. We will organise this for you.

#### Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or

[whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net)

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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## Having a breast biopsy under X-Ray (Stereotactic) guidance

### A patient's guide



## What is an X-ray guided Stereotactic biopsy?

Stereotactic breast biopsy uses mammogram imaging and low-dose X-rays to help locate a breast abnormality and remove tissue samples for examination under a microscope. It is less invasive than having a surgical biopsy in an operating theatre under general anaesthetic. It leaves little to no scarring and can be an excellent way to evaluate calcium deposits or tiny masses that are not visible on ultrasound. Your biopsy will be performed by a male or female radiologist, with a female mammographer and a female clinical assistant.

## Stereotactic guided breast biopsy procedure

You will be asked to change into a gown and to sit or lie on a chair in front of the mammography unit. The mammographer will then position your breast so that it is held gently in place throughout the procedure. Your skin will be cleaned with a sterilising solution before local anaesthetic is injected into the breast to numb the area. The pictures taken will guide the biopsy needle to the correct area for sampling and you will be aware of a whirring noise as the samples are taken. At the end of the procedure firm pressure will be applied to your breast for up to 15 minutes until any bleeding has stopped. Paper stitches (steri-strips) are then placed over the puncture site and a dressing placed over the area. You will be given a written after-care sheet to take home.

## Will it hurt?

Your breast will be under compression throughout the procedure. This may be a little uncomfortable at first. The local anaesthetic used to numb the breast may sting for a few seconds before it takes effect. Most patients report the procedure is a little uncomfortable but not painful.

Some women find it more comfortable to wear a bra following the procedure. If you do not normally wear a bra, please bring a soft, non-wired bra (such as a sports bra) with you to wear after the procedure, and for the following few days.

## Radiological marker clip

A tiny titanium clip is placed into the breast at the end of the procedure. This is helpful if the area biopsied needs to be located again. It will not do you any harm or trigger metal detectors at airports. If your results indicate that you need surgery, the clip will be removed. If your results are normal then the clip will remain in place so that in future your mammograms will show the exact location of your biopsy site.

## How do I prepare for the biopsy?

**Please ring the Imaging Help Desk on 020 7288 5888 and ask to speak to a member of the Breast Imaging Team if:**

- You are taking any medication which might increase your tendency to bleed after the biopsy, these include, Warfarin, Rivaroxaban, Apixaban, Clopidogrel (Plavix), or Heparin injections
- You are allergic to local anaesthetic
- You have a physical disability
- You are pregnant or breast feeding

## On the day of your appointment

We recommend that you do not drive yourself to the appointment but you may bring a friend or relative with you. They will be asked to wait outside the mammography room during the procedure. Please plan to be at the hospital for at least 90 minutes when considering parking, childcare or time off work. Please eat and drink normally and take your medication as usual unless you have been specifically directed otherwise. Please do not wear deodorant, powder or creams on your breasts or underarm areas, as these can affect the accuracy of your results. No other particular preparation is required.

## Are there any side effects?

1. Pain/discomfort at the biopsy site after the local anaesthetic has worn off usually in 1-2 hours. Taking simple pain killers such as paracetamol (not aspirin) can help with this or wearing a soft bra.
2. Bruising – this can cause swelling and the lump can appear to get bigger, this usually settles by itself.
3. Bleeding, should the wound start to bleed apply pressure for 10 minutes. If the bleeding continues contact your GP, accident and emergency department or 111.

You will be given a post procedure advice leaflet to take home.

There is also a small risk that the area of abnormality is in a part of the breast which proves to be difficult to obtain good tissue samples. This may lead to an inconclusive biopsy result, and your doctor may advise an alternative investigation, such as a diagnostic surgical excision biopsy.

## Results

The tissue samples will be sent to the laboratory to be examined by a pathologist and your breast surgeon will contact you with the results. This may take up to two weeks.

**Further questions:** Please contact the Imaging Help Desk on 020 7288 5888 between 9am and 5pm.