

Information for Patients and Carers

Stereotactic Vacuum Assisted Breast Biopsy

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of three overlapping, wavy bands of blue. The top band is a light blue, the middle is a medium blue, and the bottom is a dark blue.

What is a vacuum assisted breast biopsy?

This is a way of looking at small samples of breast tissue taken from the breast using mammography and a special hollow probe attached to a gentle vacuum pump. It is a method which avoids a surgical operation. The samples are then sent to the laboratory for processing and examination under a microscope.

Important Information

Please inform us before you attend:

- If you are or think you may be pregnant
- If you are breast/chest feeding
- If you have problems sitting upright in a chair or require a hoist to transfer
- If you are taking tablets to thin the blood (anticoagulants)
- If you are allergic to injections of local anaesthetic (which are commonly used at the dentist)

Preparation for the procedure

Do not apply deodorant or antiperspirant before your appointment as it may show on the mammograms. You may be in the X-Ray department for up to 1 hour.

You will be asked to undress from the waist up. It would be helpful if you could wear a skirt or trousers instead of a dress.

Can you bring a relative or friend with you?

A relative or friend can accompany you to the hospital, but they will usually not be allowed into the room when you have your examination.

Please note that as we have limited seating and do not have childcare facilities, you are advised not to bring small children with you to your appointment.

What happens when you arrive?

When you arrive, please report to the reception desk in the Central Lancashire Breast Unit. The nearest car park to the Central Lancashire Breast Unit is at the Preston Road entrance to the hospital.

You will be shown to a cubicle and asked to undress from the waist up and put on a gown, which will be provided. You will then be taken into an X-ray room where the mammographer will check some details with you.

A doctor who specialises in X-ray procedures (the radiologist or an advanced / enhanced practitioner) will explain the procedure to you and answer any questions you may have. You will be asked to sign a consent form.

The biopsy will be carried out using the mammography machine for guidance.

Your procedure

The vacuum assisted biopsy is performed with you sitting in a chair. The mammographer will position your breast on the X-ray machine. Your breast will be compressed in exactly the same way as for a mammogram, but for a longer period of time while the needle is put into the breast.

A local anaesthetic will be injected before any samples are taken. You will feel some stinging as the local anaesthetic is injected, but the area soon goes numb. A small nick may be made in the skin to assist in placing the biopsy needle.

The needle will be inserted through the skin and will suck a small sample of breast tissue into a small cylinder. Several samples will be taken without removing the needle. You may feel some pressure. It may be necessary to place a small titanium 'marker' in the breast at the site from where the samples have been taken. This is so that the area can be identified again if necessary. This marker will remain in the breast tissue and will not cause you any harm. The radiologist will discuss this with you at the start of the procedure. A mammogram will be performed to confirm the position of the marker.

After the procedure

Firm pressure will be applied to the area for several minutes to stop any bleeding and reduce bruising. A dressing will be applied over the area, which must be kept in place for 5 days. You will be provided with an after care leaflet.

If the wound becomes red and sore in the days following the biopsy, it might have become infected. If this occurs, please consult your GP. You may develop a small scar.

If you experience any discomfort, normal pain relievers such as paracetamol may be taken. You should not take aspirin as this may increase bruising.

It may be uncomfortable to drive following the procedure and you may want to bring someone who can drive you home.

You should not undertake any activity which involves excessive arms movement for 24 hours following the procedure as it may cause the biopsy site to bleed.

Side effects

A breast biopsy is a safe and common procedure. As with any procedure there is always the risk that a complication may develop. Occasionally there may be some bleeding inside the breast and a bruise or swelling (Haematoma) will form and this can be uncomfortable for a day or two. Any bruising should fade within 7-10 days.

Are there any risks?

We use the smallest radiation dose possible, in line with national regulations, to provide as much information as we can about your condition.

The results of your procedure will give your doctor useful information about your condition and will help to plan your treatment.

A breast biopsy is a safe and common procedure.

Your results

The biopsy sample will be reviewed after your visit.
You will not receive any results on the day of the procedure but we will be able to advise you when and how you will be given your results.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact us:

X-Ray Appointments Chorley: **01257 245861**

Breast Care Nurses: **01257 245690**

(Monday to Friday 08:30–4:30)

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.gov.uk/government/publications/breast-screening-radiation-risk-with-digital-mammography

www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-radiation-uses-dose-measurements-and-safety-advice

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All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the

buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**.

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

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Division: Diagnostics and Clinical Support

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