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Patient information

**Breast Needle Biopsy Test (Clinical)**

Breast Services Directorate

Your hospital specialist has advised you to have a needle biopsy test. The test will be performed by a doctor (Surgeon) or by an Advanced Nurse Practitioner.

### **What is a needle biopsy?**

This is a simple procedure which will enable the specialist to obtain a small amount of breast tissue. A needle is introduced into the breast to obtain the specimen. A local anaesthetic will be used for this test. This will take about 20 minutes, and will be performed in the Breast Unit at the Royal Liverpool Hospital.

### **What are the benefits of having a needle biopsy?**

The aim of having a needle biopsy is to be able to make a diagnosis (to find out more about your breast problem).

### **What are the risks of having a needle biopsy?**

You will probably develop some bruising after the test.

You may have some bleeding at the site of the needle biopsy (where the needle was placed into the breast). This will be stopped before you leave the clinic and a dressing will cover this part of the breast.

You may bleed from the site after you leave the Department. If this happens, cover the area with another clean dressing and apply gentle pressure for at least ten minutes, or until the bleeding stops. If you are worried you can contact the Breast Unit on the phone number below, during normal working hours, or your family doctor (GP) or go to your local Walk in Centre.

## **Are there any alternative procedures or investigations available?**

It may be possible to have a fine needle test to obtain some breast cells to check under the microscope, but this may not give your doctor as much information about your breast problem as the needle biopsy test.

Occasionally the needle biopsy does not provide enough information to make a diagnosis and then a small operation may be performed to remove some breast tissue, to make a diagnosis. You will need to be admitted to the breast ward and go to theatre for this procedure.

## **What will happen if I decide not to have this done?**

We may not be able to make a diagnosis, or be able to tell you if you need treatment for your breast problem.

## **What sort of anaesthetic will be given to me?**

You will be given a local anaesthetic.

Local anaesthetic is drug-induced numbness: it may be provided by an anaesthetist, surgeon or other healthcare professional, depending on the technique used. Like all medicines, local anaesthetics may sometimes cause side effects, as well as the effects that are needed. You may experience dizziness, blurred vision, drowsiness and occasionally loss of consciousness.

Serious side effects are rare, and include fits, low blood pressure, slowed breathing and changes in heartbeat, which may be life-threatening. If you have any concerns about any of these effects, you should discuss them with your doctor.

**For more information, please ask for a copy of the leaflet “You and Your Anaesthetic” (PIF 344).**

Royal Liverpool Hospital and Broadgreen Hospital PIF 1343 V4

**If you are worried about any of these risks, please speak to your Consultant or a member of their team.**

## **Going Home**

You will be able to go home once the bleeding has stopped. A needle biopsy test is a routine procedure and therefore you can continue with your normal activity. It is advised that you avoid any heavy work if the breast is painful. If the breast becomes painful once the local anaesthetic has worn off, you could take a simple pain killer (like paracetamol which you might take for a headache) to ease the discomfort.

## **Your wound**

A dressing will be applied to the biopsy area. We advise that you keep this in place for 24 hours. Please avoid getting this area wet (with a bath or shower) during this time.

After 24 hours you can remove the dressing and replace it with a small plaster, if you wish.

## **Further Appointments**

The specimen of your breast tissue is sent to the laboratory to be checked under the microscope and be reported on. You will be given an appointment to attend clinic within fourteen days to receive the results.

## **Further information**

### **Breast Unit**

**9.00 am - 5.00pm**

**Tel: 0151 706 2920**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2920**

**Out of hours contact:**

**Ward 9Y**

**Tel: 0151 706 2496**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2496**

**Author: Breast Services Directorate**

**Review date: October 2019**

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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