



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Stereotactic Core Biopsy

Issued by the Breast Team



This leaflet is to explain what a stereotactic core biopsy is, and what it involves. Your doctor or nurse will discuss this in more detail.

Why am I having a stereotactic core biopsy?

We have seen an area in your breast tissue, on mammogram, that needs to be investigated further. To do this you have been advised to have a stereotactic core biopsy.

What is a stereotactic core biopsy?

A stereotactic core biopsy has been advised so that a sample of breast tissue can be taken from the breast of an abnormality that is visible on mammogram, but not on ultrasound scan.

The stereotactic core biopsy is done in the x-ray department and uses the mammogram machine to guide us to the correct area.

The biopsy will take at least 1½ hours in total.

Will the test be painful?

Most women find the stereotactic core biopsy can be uncomfortable. You will be given local anaesthetic into the skin in the internal breast tissue which will numb the area to be tested.

Some women find the procedure unpleasant due to the length of time the stereotactic core biopsy takes to do, and the use of the mammogram machine. However, please be reassured that we explain the procedure thoroughly before it is done, and you will have a member of staff from the x-ray department present to support you throughout the procedure.

How is the biopsy done?

The biopsy is carried out by the consultant in the x-ray department. There will also be a mammographer there, who will take the mammogram pictures and a radiographic assistant will also be in the room.

You must tell us if you are on any medication to thin your blood, or if you have a clotting disorder.

The consultant will explain how the biopsy will be done, and will ask you to sign a consent form agreeing to have the biopsy taken.

As the biopsy is guided by mammogram your breast will be compressed in the mammogram machine, this can be for up to 30 minutes.

A mammogram will be done first, and the area to be biopsied will be identified.

You will be made as comfortable as possible either sitting or lying down whilst your breast is in the mammogram machine.

Your skin will be cleaned.

Local anaesthetic will be given to numb your skin and the area to be biopsied. You will feel stinging in the skin and tissues whilst the local anaesthetic is given.

A larger stereotactic core biopsy needle is put into your breast where we have numbed the area. You will be able to see this needle due to the way it is put into your breast. This can be concerning however please do not be alarmed, it is normal to use this needle so that the biopsy can be taken.

It is important you keep as still as possible at this point of the procedure.

You will feel some pressure, but should not feel any pain.

The biopsies are sometimes x-rayed, if we need to look for calcification. At this point we can decide if further biopsies are needed.

When all the biopsies have been taken, and before the larger needle is removed, a marker clip will be placed into the biopsy site. The marker clip is approximately 2mm in size, it will not cause any pain once it is in your breast. This allows us to check with a mammogram that the correct area has been sampled, and will also highlight on any future mammograms, that the area has been tested.

If no more biopsies are needed the needle will be removed.

The radiology assistant will press on the area that has had the biopsy for 10 -15 minutes, to reduce the risk of bleeding.

You will be asked to remain in the hospital / or on the unit for 30 minutes. This is to ensure that if you have any bleeding, or feel unwell after the test, that you can receive medical assistance.

What happens after the biopsy?

After the biopsy you may experience some tenderness. This is quite normal and may be relieved by taking a mild painkiller, such as paracetamol – do not take aspirin.

There may be bruising in the skin and in the tissues where the biopsy has been taken from. This is normal and should fade as any other bruise would.

You may develop a lump called a haematoma. This is a bruise inside your breast in the tissues. This usually settles with time, it may take weeks or months, but the area may feel different afterwards.

To help reduce discomfort and bruising we suggest you wear a firm bra or sports bra for 48 hours, we also advise wearing the bra to bed.

A small amount of oozing blood is normal following a stereotactic core biopsy, however if you are at home and you notice some bleeding then please press on the area for 30 minutes. If the bleeding does not stop, or if you are concerned then please go to your local walk-in service.

If you have any other concerns or questions following the stereotactic core biopsy, you can ring the breast nurses at the hospital for advice.

You will be able to resume your usual activities following the biopsy.

Results

The results will take 7 – 10 days. The multidisciplinary team will meet to discuss your results and decide what to do next. You will be given an appointment to be seen in clinic to discuss the results, and any further investigations, or treatment.

Contact us

If you have any concerns or queries please contact us Monday – Friday 8.30am- 5pm.

Clinical Nurse Specialist Breast Care
North Tyneside General Hospital
0191 293 4183

Clinical Nurse Specialist Breast Care
Hexham General Hospital
01434 655 386

Clinical Nurse Specialist Breast Care
Wansbeck General Hospital
01670 529 319
01670 529 391
01670 529 636

Sources of information

Breast Cancer Care
Helpline 0808 800 6000
Website www.breastcancercare.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Relief Helpline
0845 601 6161 or
Website www.macmillan.org.uk

Breast Care Campaign
www.breastcare.co.uk

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 07815 500015

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

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General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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