

Vacuum Core Biopsy (1 of 2)



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

Name: Nicola Bell
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Why do I need Vacuum Core Biopsy?

Your breast imaging has shown an area that requires further investigation. A vacuum biopsy allows us to take tissue from this area for diagnostic purposes. It is an accurate, non-surgical procedure completed on an outpatient basis with minimum discomfort and recovery time.

There is no need for a general anaesthetic.

Remember that a large number of abnormalities turn out to be benign and of no risk to your health.

Please notify the department, before your appointment, if you take warfarin or any other drugs which may affect your blood clotting (such as Clopidogrel, aspirin or other anti-platelet medication) or if you have a bleeding disorder.

Contact us on 01722 429282 (Monday – Friday 8.15am to 4.45pm)

How is a Vacuum Core Biopsy performed?

Please allow one hour in total for your appointment, occasionally it may take longer. Most of the time is taken in preparation, positioning and aftercare. The actual biopsy lasts only a few minutes.

- The procedure is performed by a radiologist with the help of a radiographer and an assistant.
- Vacuum biopsies are performed either under ultrasound or mammographic guidance.
- Under mammographic guidance the breast is compressed in a manner similar to a normal mammogram and x-rays are taken of the area to be biopsied. You will need to be able to keep still during the procedure.
- Under ultrasound guidance you will lie on the couch as you would for a routine ultrasound.
- Your skin will be cleaned and local anaesthetic injected to numb the area. The biopsy needle is gently inserted into the breast and the tissue samples obtained. You will be aware of a slight whirring noise and vibration. The procedure is generally well tolerated and it is unusual for patients to find it painful. There might be slight discomfort for brief periods. We will be talking to you throughout the procedure and endeavouring to keep you comfortable.

Clinical Radiology
01722 429282

Use of a marker clip

We will usually insert a very small clip after all the samples have been obtained, into the site of the biopsy, so that the area can be easily located again if necessary. The clip is smaller than a grain of rice and made of titanium and will cause no problems or side effects.

- It will not set off alarms at airports and is MRI safe.
- If you do not need further treatment it can be left safely in your breast forever.

After the biopsy

After the procedure, firm compression is applied to the biopsy area for 5-10 minutes to reduce bruising. A paper stitch and dressing are then applied to the small wound. The care instructions will be explained to you and offered on a printed sheet.

You will be asked to take a letter to the Medical & Surgical Out-Patients department to make an appointment for the following week to receive the result.

After-care

- When the local anaesthetic wears off, the area might feel sore. Some bruising is also to be expected. We recommend that you take a painkiller as you normally would for a headache, such as Paracetamol. Follow the instructions on the packet carefully. Ibuprofen should be avoided for the first 24 hours.
- If you take Aspirin for any other health condition continue to take your recommended dose after the biopsy but do not take extra Aspirin for pain relief, as this will encourage bleeding or bruising.
- It is recommended that the wound is covered with a waterproof plaster when you shower.
- Avoid strenuous exercise and heavy lifting for 24-48 hours to minimize bruising. Otherwise, you can carry on with your normal routine if you wish.