

Vacuum Excision Biopsy



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.

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Date written: April 2013
Review date: October 2021
Version: 1.0
Code: PI1545

Why do I need a Vacuum Excision Biopsy?

Your previous breast biopsy has shown an area that requires further investigation. An excision biopsy allows us to take slightly more tissue from this area (approximately double what was taken last time) for diagnostic purposes. It is an accurate, non-surgical procedure completed on a day case 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 Excision Biopsy performed?

- Please allow at least three hours in total for your appointment, occasionally it may take longer. Most of the time is taken in preparation and in the recovery phase where we will monitor you for approximately 2 hours. 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 may be aware of a slight whirring noise or 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.

Clinical Radiology
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