

Breast Surgery

Vacuum Assisted Biopsy

What is a Vacuum Assisted Biopsy?

A vacuum assisted biopsy (VAB) is a biopsy obtained under local anaesthetic and is done using either ultrasound or x-ray guidance. The VAB uses a special needle attached to a vacuum device to enable more tissue to be removed. The samples obtained are then sent for further investigation in the laboratory. This allows your doctors to make confident decisions on your treatment plan.

What are the risks?

VAB is very safe procedure. However following a VAB you may experience:

Bleeding - It is rare to have bleeding from the wound after the biopsy. You can however develop a haematoma (a collection of blood) at the area of the biopsy within your breast. Applying pressure will make the bleeding stop. For the vast majority of patients this will clear up on its own, however you can have some discoloration of the skin during the process and some discomfort when the anaesthetic wears off. We will give you aftercare instructions following the procedure.

Swelling - Some people have swelling but this is rare and resolves quickly.

Infection - Everything is done under aseptic conditions to minimise the risk of infection. The wound will be covered with a dressing after the procedure and we will advise you how to look after it.

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1



How do I prepare for the procedure?

Medication - Please let us know if you are taking any blood thinning or antiplatelet medicines for example: warfarin, aspirin, clopidogrel, rivaroxaban as you may need to stop them before the procedure.

Meals - You can eat and drink as normal.

Allergies - If you are allergic to any medication, particularly local anaesthetic, please let us know.

IF YOU HAVE A LATEX ALLERGY PLEASE ADVISE THE STAFF WHEN YOU ATTEND FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT.

Escort - If possible please bring a friend or relative to accompany you home, please note they will not be allowed into the examination room.

Driving - We recommend you do not drive for the rest of the day.

What happens during the procedure?

If we are using the Ultrasound to locate the area for biopsy you will be asked to lie on your back. If we are using the x-ray machine to guide us a Radiographer will position you in the mammogram machine, either sitting or lying down on a couch.

Mammogram images will be taken to check the correct area has been located. In both methods a local anaesthetic will be injected into the skin and into the breast tissue to numb the area. When this is numb a Radiologist or Specialist Radiographer will make a small cut in the skin and the needle will be inserted into the breast. You may have more x-rays to check the needle position. A vacuum system is then used to remove the breast tissue sample and you will hear a noise in the background and feel some vibration while the procedure is in process. When the biopsy is performed a tiny marker clip may be inserted into the breast tissue so the area can be seen on future mammograms. This marker is perfectly safe, it is made of titanium and can



safely be left in the breast tissue. The test takes about 45minutes and isn't usually painful but you might have some discomfort for a short time.

After your procedure

Immediately after the procedure we will apply firm pressure on your breast for 10 — 15 minutes. This will help minimise the risk of developing internal bruising. Paper stitches are then put over the area with a waterproof dressing over the top. You may need to stay for a little while in the clinic to ensure you feel comfortable enough to travel home. We recommend that for the rest of the day you try not to do too much and avoid strenuous exercise for the following two days. You should be able to go back to work the next day. We will give you a post procedure leaflet before you leave to advice on your after care.

Results - The tissue sample collected will be sent to the lab for analysis. We will make an appointment for your results which will normally take 1— 2 weeks.

Your experience matters

We aim to provide the care that we would want for ourselves, our families and friends. If you think something could have been done differently, please speak to the department or ward staff. You can contact them by calling the hospital switchboard and asking for the relevant department. Further information about our services is available on our website:

- **Phone (hospital switchboard):** 01432 355444
- [Wye Valley NHS Trust](#)

This leaflet is available in alternative formats. If you need this please contact the Patient Experience Team using the telephone number or email below.

After using our services we may ask for your opinion about your experience. Your feedback helps us to make things better for all our patients. You can also contact the Patient Experience Team by:

- **Phone:** 01432 372986 (please leave an answerphone message)
- **Email:** PALS@wvt.nhs.uk

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3



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