

Patient information sheet for wire guided localisation of breast lesions

What is this procedure?

This is a special mammogram to allow a needle to be placed in the breast in order to guide the surgeon to the area of the abnormality. It will be performed in the X-Ray department.

Why is it being done?

The abnormality that is to be removed cannot be seen or felt, and is only detectable on the mammogram.

What will happen on the day?

You will be asked to attend either the day case or an inpatient ward, and from there will be escorted to the X-ray department.

The radiographer will explain the procedure, and the radiologist will explain it again if you wish. You will have ample opportunity to ask questions.

You will be asked to sit at the mammography machine, and initially the procedure will be like a normal mammogram. The difference is that the compression plate has a grid of holes so that a needle can be inserted whilst the compression is applied. The initial x-ray will be taken, and the position of the abnormality measured. The radiologist will give you an injection of local anaesthetic into the skin, and then insert the localisation needle. A final x-ray will be taken to confirm the position of the needle and the compression carefully released, so that the needle remains in position.

This part of the procedure takes less than 5 minutes, and it is vital that you do not move until it is finished, so it is important that you are comfortable.

A final mammogram will be taken in the normal way to show the position of the lesion in relation to the depth of the needle.

When we are happy with the position of the needle, a loose dressing will be applied. The needle has to stay in position until surgery, when it will be removed. It will not easily drop out, but could be dislodged if it catches in clothing, so you may be given a loose gown to wear until surgery. Please be aware that it is there and be careful not to catch it before the operation.

Variations

It is important that the lesion lies below a hole in the compression plate, so the first x ray may need to be repeated to ensure this.

Depending on where the lesion lies in the breast, the needle may be inserted from the top, the bottom or from the side. The shortest route from the skin will be chosen.

Is there anything I need to do beforehand or to prepare?
Nothing, apart from any preparation you may have been asked to do for the operation.

Please let us know if you are allergic to plaster or local anaesthetic.

Will there be any after effects?

None from the procedure as you will be having your operation soon afterwards. The needle will be removed during the operation.