

Advice following a core biopsy or fine needle aspiration (FNA)

Information and advice for patients

Breast Care

The core biopsy and fine needle aspiration (FNA) are tests used to help understand more about any abnormalities that have been found in your breasts. Even after taking further X-rays or having an ultrasound scan of your breasts, it is sometimes necessary to take small pieces of breast tissue (core biopsy) or a sample of breast cells (FNA).

This is then sent to the laboratory in the Pathology Department for testing. It takes several days to prepare the tissue for the Pathologist (a doctor who examines the tissue) to determine if we need to do anything further.

Going home

You may be required to remain in the department for up to 20 minutes after the procedure to ensure you are feeling well before returning home.

As you may be in the unit for up to three hours, you are welcome to bring a family member or friend with you.

How to deal with the side-effects of the core biopsy or FNA

You may find that your breast may ache for a little while after the local anaesthetic has worn off. A painkiller such as paracetamol should help. Please do not take aspirin as this may cause bruising. If, however, you are already taking aspirin as part of your prescribed medication, please continue with your usual daily dose as prescribed.

Do not be concerned if you develop significant bruising around the biopsy site and/or feel a lump there over the next day or so; this is quite normal and will clear on its own.

Dressings

Please leave your dressing in place for at least 24 hours unless you develop any itching, as this may mean you are allergic to the dressing. In this case, you should remove your dressing.

If there is any bleeding from the biopsy site, press firmly over the dressing until the bleeding stops.

Normal activities

We advise you not to do any lifting or strenuous activity for 24 hours.

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Follow-up

All core biopsy and FNA results are discussed at our weekly meeting which includes Radiology, Pathology, Nursing and Surgical Staff. It will be at least a week before your result will be given to you. You will be sent or given an appointment to discuss your results with a consultant. At this appointment you may need to have a physical examination. The consultant may examine your breasts and the glands under your arms. Having had a biopsy, you may be tender around the biopsy site.

Contact details

Breast care nurses

Birmingham and Sandwell

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Walsall

Tel: 01922 721 172 (Ext. 7108)

City Breast Unit

Birmingham Treatment Centre

City Hospital

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B18 7QH

Tel: 0121 507 4967

Walsall Breast Unit

Walsall Manor Hospital

Moat Road

Walsall

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Tel: 01922 721 172 (Ext. 6404)

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Further information

If you need any further assistance or advice please contact one of our breast care nurses or your family GP.

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our website www.swbh.nhs.uk, follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- NHS Breast Screening Programme (2007) Improving the Quality of the Written Information sent to Women about Breast Screening: Evidence-Based Criteria for the Content of Letters and Leaflets. Publication No 64 ,August 2007.
- Goldsmith, M. Bankhead, C and Austoker, J (2007). Improving the quality of the written information sent to women about breast screening: guidelines on the content of letters and leaflets. Sheffield: NHS Cancer Screening Programmes.
- Public Health England (2016) Breast Screening: Clinical guidelines for screening assessment 4th Edition. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/breast-screening-clinical-guidelines-for-screening-management> (Accessed: 2 December 2019)

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