

X-ray (Stereotactic) Vacuum Assisted Excision

Breast Imaging Department, Radiology

Your doctor or a member of the breast imaging team has advised you to have an X-ray guided vacuum assisted excision. This leaflet has been written to help you understand what the procedure involves.

What is an X-ray guided vacuum assisted excision?

An X-ray guided vacuum assisted excision removes pieces of tissue from an abnormality using X-rays to locate the abnormality seen on your mammograms. The vacuum assisted excision needle is larger and has gentle suction applied to it allowing removal of more tissue than a biopsy.

What are the benefits of having the procedure?

Your Doctor or a member of the breast imaging team will discuss the benefits with you prior to undertaking the procedure.

An abnormality has shown on your mammogram (X-ray of your breasts) and a sample of tissue has already been taken using a standard biopsy procedure. Your Doctor has recommended a vacuum assisted excision of the abnormality that was previously biopsied to remove it completely from your breast. The x-ray machine produces a detailed picture of the breast and the images can be used to locate the position of the abnormality within the breast.

What are the risks of the procedure?

There are some risks involved with the use of X-rays. The overriding concern of your doctor and Radiology is to ensure that when radiation is used the benefits from making the right diagnosis outweigh any small risk involved.

X-rays can very rarely cause cancer. According to the National Breast Screening Programme having a mammogram every 3 years for 20 years can very slightly increase the chance of getting cancer over a woman's lifetime.

Radiologists / Radiographers who perform the examination are trained to ensure that the radiation dose associated with the examination is always kept to a minimum.

A small amount of bleeding may occur at the excision site, and bruising to the breast is common. Sometimes the bruise may make your breast feel lumpy.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

If you are on any blood thinning medication please contact the Breast Imaging Department straight away.

Infection at the biopsy site is rare but a possibility.

What will I need to do before the procedure?

1. Please bring with you a list of your medication (we will need to know about certain medications before this procedure).
2. The specialist will also check some details with you including certain medications.
3. You will be asked to remove the clothing from the top half of your body, including your bra, and wear a hospital gown. It is easier to wear a skirt or trousers instead of a dress for your appointment. You are welcome to bring your own dressing gown to your appointment.
4. The specialist undertaking the procedure (or someone trained to take consent) will explain the procedure to you and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.
5. We must seek your consent for any procedure or treatment beforehand. The specialist undertaking the procedure (or a professional trained to take consent) will explain the risks, benefits and alternatives where relevant before they ask for your consent. If you are unsure about any aspect of the proposed procedure or treatment please do not hesitate to ask for more information.

How long will I be at the hospital for?

Please expect to be at the hospital for at least 1 hour.

What will happen during the procedure?

1. You will be taken into the x-ray room and asked to sit on a chair. The radiographer will position your breast into the X-ray machine and the breast will be compressed (squashed) so that you are kept still and a clear X-ray can be taken. The compression stays on the breast during the whole procedure, which usually takes around 30 minutes.
2. X-rays are taken to target the abnormality within your breast, sometimes your breast may need to be repositioned in the machine.
3. A local anaesthetic will be given to numb the area around where the tissue needs to be taken from. The specialist will ensure that the area is numb before proceeding.
4. A tiny cut is made in the skin.
5. The vacuum assisted needle is placed into the breast at the targeted abnormality.
6. Once in position, the needle stays in your breast while the abnormality is excised.
7. During this time you will hear a "whirring" noise.
8. Small amounts of tissue are cut and sucked away using the needle, and this is repeated until the excision is completed.
9. There will be only one visible cut on the skin surface.
10. The specialist may insert a breast marker clip following the procedure. If this is required then the specialist will discuss this with you and give you a separate leaflet.
11. You can choose to stop the procedure at any point during the procedure but this may mean the abnormality may not be completely excised.

What will happen after the procedure?

1. A member of staff will press on the area of the breast where the abnormality has been excised to help stop the bleeding and minimise bruising. This may take up to 15 minutes.
2. A member of staff will apply a small dressing to the site of the excision. This may or may not include the use of a steri-strip (wound closure strips).
3. You may be asked to remain in the department after the procedure for 30 minutes to check for further bleeding.
4. You will then be able to get dressed.
5. Arrangements will be made as to how you will get the results of the excision.

What is the aftercare advice?

Most women feel some discomfort and experience bruising to the breast following the procedure. If your breasts feel tender following the procedure please take over the counter painkillers, such as paracetamol as per the instructions on the packet. Avoid products containing aspirin.

It is recommended to avoid heavy lifting for 48 hours following the procedure. Lifting small babies, less than one year old is not considered heavy lifting.

The dressing can be removed after 24 hours; you do not need to reapply another dressing. Keep the site clean and dry.

Your bra (including under-wired) can be worn as normal following the procedure to provide support to the breast.

If bleeding occurs after you go home and does not stop following 10 minutes of hard pressure, then you should contact your GP or NHS Direct (111, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) for advice. In the unlikely event that the bleeding is severe then we suggest you go to your nearest Emergency Department (ED).

Will it be painful?

Some patients experience discomfort or pain when the compression is applied and when the local anaesthetic is given. The local anaesthetic used works quickly and the area will go numb.

Some patients experience aching and discomfort of the breast following the procedure, once the local anaesthetic wears off.

Are there any alternatives to a stereotactic vacuum assisted excision?

The only alternative to a stereotactic vacuum assisted excision is a surgical excision under a general anaesthetic. You will have discussed this option with your doctor before this appointment.

Can I go back to work?

Yes, you can however it is recommended to avoid heavy lifting activities for 48 hours. Carrying small babies, less than a year old is not considered heavy lifting. In our experience discomfort felt post procedure is minor and does not impact on normal routine activities such as driving.

What follow up should I expect?

Your doctor or a member of the breast imaging team will discuss how you will get the results of the excision with you.

What to do if the appointment is not suitable?

We are happy to change your appointment; however please be aware that certain sessions within the week will not be available due to different clinics being supported by Breast Imaging. You can contact us on 01902 695923. This is a direct line; you will not need to go through switchboard.

If you are unable to attend your appointment please let us know as soon as possible so that the appointment can be given to another patient.

Whom can I speak to if I want to ask questions before I come for my vacuum assisted excision?

The Breast Care Nurses can be contacted on 01902 695144 during office hours of 8:30 and 16:00. There is a 24 hour answer machine on this line and if the Breast Care Nurses are unavailable then please leave your name and telephone number and someone will return your call as soon as possible. Alternatively if you would like to speak to a Radiographer / Sonographer about the examination please call 01902 695923 during the office hours of 08:30 to 17:00.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。