

## Patient Information

### Vacuum Assisted Core Biopsy

#### What is a biopsy?

A biopsy is a method of collecting a small amount of tissue using a needle, which is then examined by a pathologist for further assessment of possible diseases. Vacuum-assisted biopsies of the breast are performed using mammographic guidance.

#### Preparation

Typically, no preparation is required although it is important to contact us and let us know if you are taking any blood thinning medications or have an iodine allergy prior to the appointment.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing that is easy to take on and off.

We require you to come with **someone to assist you and drive you home after the procedure**. Public transport is not acceptable. *Should your circumstances be that you do not have anyone to accompany you, please contact us immediately to discuss.*

#### How long will it take?

The procedure usually takes approximately 1 hour.

#### What to expect

- The biopsy will be performed by a specialist breast radiologist who will be assisted by our radiographers.
- You will be asked to change into a gown and seated in a chair which will either be sat upright or reclined during the procedure. The position depends on the biopsy location.
- Your breast will be compressed lightly between plates where a digital device assists in directing the radiologist where they are doing the biopsy.
- You will be required to keep very still as even slight movements may move your breast.
- Several biopsies may be required, staff will provide information about the procedure on the day.
- Once obtained, the specimen will be taken to pathology where it will be examined and a report regarding your sample will be sent to your doctor.
- A small marker or clip may be placed at the biopsy site at the end of the procedure. If a clip is required and you require an MRI, this is MRI safe.
- To place this clip there is an additional out of pocket expense. This covers the cost of the clip only and is not claimable through Medicare or your health fund.

#### After Your Examination

- After your biopsy you will be given an ice pack. The ice pack provided should be pressed against the site of the biopsy (not at the skin nick – this biopsy spot will be indicated by the doctor performing the study) for at least ten (10) minutes.
- The Band-Aid or steristrips used to cover the skin nick is to prevent infection. Please avoid getting the area wet until the next morning's shower. To reduce the risk of infection, it is recommended you do not swim or have a bath the following day.
- After the shower pat the steristrips dry, leaving them intact until the following morning.
- After the following morning, you can shower or bath with the steristrips, if starting to peel, they can be removed.
- If at that time the nick is wet with fresh blood apply a normal Band-Aid, otherwise leave it uncovered. The nick will heal fully in one week.
- The local anaesthesia will wear off in about two (2) hours. Paracetamol (Panadol or the like) is recommended for pain if necessary. Do not take aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (such as Nurofen) since these drugs will increase the likelihood of bruising.
- **Note:** Some patients are allergic to the adhesive in Band-Aids and although rare this would be evident as skin irritation (burning, redness, blisters).
- **Take it easy for the next 24-48 hours.** Avoid strenuous activity involving the upper body (sports, exercise, housework, heavy lifting)

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### Possible Side-Effects and Complications

In general, this is a very safe procedure, but there are some potential complications that may occur.

The main ones are:

- Localised pain or dull ache around the biopsy site.
- Bleeding, bruising or drainage at biopsy site.
- Increasing redness or swelling.

Rarer complications may include:

- Infection
- Occasionally the pathology on the specimen may be inconclusive leading to the need for further biopsy or procedure.

### Questions?

*You will be given the opportunity to ask any questions of the technicians or radiologist at the time of your procedure, however if you have any queries prior to the appointment, please feel free to contact us by phone or email – 02 9170 4500 or [breast@nsrnm.com.au](mailto:breast@nsrnm.com.au)*

If you have any questions regarding **why** the biopsy is required, these should be directed to your specialist or the doctor looking after you. We are happy to re-schedule your booking so you can discuss it with your doctor.

