

patient information

Core Biopsy of the Breast



QUEENSLAND
X-RAY

CORE BIOPSY OF THE BREAST

The Core Biopsy Procedure

Your doctor has requested that you have a Core Biopsy of your breast. In this procedure, samples of breast tissue will be obtained and sent to a Pathologist (a doctor trained to examine tissue samples) for review.

The Core Biopsy procedure involves making a small cut in the skin and removing cylindrical tissue samples from the area of concern. This is done using a specifically designed Core Biopsy needle.

The Core Biopsy procedure is performed under a local anaesthetic, which will numb the area.

Ultrasound or X-ray guidance may be used to help the doctor direct the needle into the appropriate area of the breast. If X-ray guidance is used, you will be positioned either sitting or lying on your side. The breast is then compressed much like a Mammogram. Because the procedure may cause some localised bleeding, it is important that you let the Radiologist (a doctor who specialises in medical imaging) know if you have a bleeding disorder or are taking any medication to thin the blood e.g. Warfarin. The test will usually take between 30 minutes to one hour to complete.

The procedure may cause minor discomfort when obtaining the samples of breast tissue; however, it is unusual for this pain to be severe.

The tissue samples are immediately sent to a Pathologist after the procedure. The Pathologist will then examine the small tissue samples and determine whether they represent normal or abnormal tissue. The Pathologist is generally able to issue a report on the tissue samples within 48 hours. A copy of the report is sent to Queensland X-Ray and to your doctor.

After Care Procedure

Unfortunately, although we try to avoid all complications, some discomfort and tenderness will follow a Biopsy.

Immediately following the Biopsy we will apply pressure for several minutes in order to minimise bruising. A dressing will be applied which should be kept in place for two days. This dressing is waterproof and you are able to wash with this on. Following a Core Biopsy, steristrips will also be applied which will help to avoid a scar.



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The following advice is recommended:

Exercise: Please avoid strenuous exercise for 48 hours following the Biopsy. Heavy weights should be particularly avoided.

Pain: Usually minor discomfort will exist for two to three days. After a Core Biopsy we often give patients a small ice pack - this can be refrozen and re-applied when you get home.

One to two tablets of Paracetamol every six hours can be taken to ease discomfort. No more than eight tablets should be taken in a 24 hour period. If the pain is particularly uncomfortable, a stronger analgesic such as Panadeine can be taken, however this may have a sedative effect and driving should be avoided.

Please avoid Aspirin, as this has a blood thinning effect and may increase bruising.

Bruising: This is very common and usually resolves in one to two weeks.

Pronounced bleeding and haematoma - We generally like to maintain a check on patients for 15-20 minutes immediately following the Biopsy while the report is being organised. If during this time you notice further bleeding please notify staff and further pressure and intervention will be organised. Firm pressure needs to be applied. The bleed may form a lump called a "haematoma". This can be quite painful. The lump will be present for several days and may take up to six weeks to resolve. There is no permanent damage to the breast after this occurrence.

Infection: This is rare, but may occur. Symptoms would include redness, swelling, pain and tenderness. This may require antibiotic treatment and you should contact your GP if this occurs.

Pneumothorax: This is a very rare but dangerous condition and occurs if the needle punctures the chest wall cavity. Symptoms would include significant shortness of breath and pain with inhalation. If you have any of these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately.

If you have any questions regarding the Core Biopsy procedure, please do not hesitate to contact Queensland X-Ray or visit our website at www.qldxray.com.au.

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