

Breast services

After your vacuum assisted core biopsy of the breast

Information for patients

Introduction

This leaflet is designed to give you information about aftercare following a vacuum assisted core biopsy of the breast. We hope it will answer the questions that you or those who care for you may have. This leaflet is not meant to replace the consultation between you and your medical team, but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed.

Bruising

When the local anaesthetic has worn off, it is common to have some bruising and discomfort for a couple of days.

Wearing a good supportive non-wired bra, such as a sports bra, for the first 48 hours after your biopsy may help reduce any discomfort. Ice can also be used to reduce the pain and swelling. You can use an ice pack or wrap some ice cubes or a bag of frozen peas in a damp tea towel and apply it to the area for up to 20 minutes. Always check your skin afterwards as ice can burn and cause blisters. For this reason, you should never place plastic bags of ice or frozen vegetables directly onto your skin.

The dressing you have over your biopsy site will help to prevent bleeding and subsequent bruising. The dressing can be removed 48 hours after your biopsy, and you may find it easier to do this by soaking it off in the shower or bath.

Pain

If you experience any pain or discomfort, you can take paracetamol to relieve this, following the instructions on the packet. Do not take aspirin, as this could cause further bleeding. If you take blood-thinning medications (such as warfarin), please contact your anticoagulant clinic for further advice if necessary.

Is there anything I need to look out for?

If you notice that the wound is bleeding, or the bruise is visibly growing, press hard on the area for 10 minutes. If this doesn't stop the bleeding or if the bruise continues to get bigger, contact the breast care nurse team, your own GP or your nearest A&E department. If you take blood-thinning medications (such as warfarin), please contact your anticoagulant clinic for advice.

If you experience chest pain or shortness of breath, visit your GP or nearest A&E department as soon as possible.

When can I get back to normal?

You should be able to resume your normal activities, such as driving or going back to work, immediately after your appointment. However, we advise you not to undertake strenuous exercise for 24 hours. You need to keep the dressing dry for 48 hours after application, so you can have a shallow bath but need to avoid showering during this time.

When will I get the results?

You will be sent an appointment to discuss the results of your biopsy with the breast surgical team. It can take up to 10 days before a result is available, as the tissue sample requires careful preparation before it can be examined under the microscope and all biopsy results are discussed at the weekly breast multidisciplinary team meeting. If you do not receive a letter for an appointment within 10 days of your biopsy, please contact the breast nursing team via the Macmillan navigator service, using the telephone number below.

Who do I contact for more help or information?

It is very important that all of your questions about the biopsy procedure are answered and that you have all the information you need about your care. Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust has a Macmillan navigator service for access to your clinical nurse specialist and other members of the clinical team. Navigators can also help with queries and provide a range of other information, help and support relating to your care. The service is available Monday to Friday 08.00–18.00 and 09.00–17.00 at weekends.

Telephone: 020 3313 0303

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street
London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:
imperial.communications@nhs.net

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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