

Breast MRI guided biopsy

Information for patients

This leaflet provides information about having a breast MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) guided biopsy, including information on what to expect and how to prepare for the biopsy. If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the team caring for you.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your name and date of birth and check your ID band. If you do not have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address. If we do not ask these questions, then please ask us to check. Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

Understanding your breast MRI guided biopsy

What is a breast MRI guided biopsy?

A breast MRI guided biopsy is a diagnostic test (designed to detect a disease) to take tissue samples from an area in your breast. The area to biopsy will be found using MRI images taken at the start of the appointment.

How long should the appointment take?

The MRI guided biopsy will take approximately 1.5 hours in total.

What happens when I arrive?

You will be asked to undress and change into a gown. A locker will be provided for your clothes.

The radiographer will go through a safety checklist with you. It is very important that you tell us if you have any of the following:

- implants
- internal electronic devices
- recent surgeries
- clips – these are often used in breast imaging to mark an area in the breast at the time of a biopsy

If any of the above applies to you we may have to defer your MRI biopsy until we can get more information about your medical history.

The radiographer will then insert a small plastic tube (cannula) into a vein. This is usually on the back of the hand or crease of your elbow. When the needle goes in you may feel a brief scratch, but once it is in place you should not feel any more pain. A band (tourniquet) may be placed around the top of your arm to squeeze it while the needle is being inserted.

What should I expect before the biopsy?

The biopsy procedure will be explained to you by the specialist doctor (radiologist), and you will be asked to sign a consent form. The radiologist will answer any questions you have about the biopsy.

Consent

We must by law obtain your written consent to any procedures beforehand. Staff will explain all the risks, benefits and alternatives before they ask you to sign a consent form. If you are unsure about any aspect of the treatment proposed, please do not hesitate to ask to speak with a senior member of staff.

What happens during the MRI guided biopsy?

The MRI scan is taken before the biopsy. The MRI uses a 'contrast fluid' which helps us to take more accurate pictures of the breast. The contrast fluid is given into a vein via the small tube

placed in your arm. You may find the contrast fluid injection uncomfortable. It is also normal to feel a slight flushing sensation when the injection is given.

You will be asked to lie on your front for the scan. The examination table has two pods or cups – one for each breast. You may find lying on your front uncomfortable, but you will be made as comfortable as possible throughout the biopsy.

The couch then slowly slides into position so that your breasts are at the centre of the MRI scanner. The images are taken in this position. It is important that you lie still during the scan (approximately 15 minutes).

The radiographer operates the MRI scanner from behind a transparent screen so they will be able to see you throughout the procedure. You will have access to a buzzer if you need to get their attention.

When the correct areas in the breast are identified by the scan, the biopsy can be taken.

How do we take the biopsy?

The radiologist will give you an injection of local anaesthetic to numb the area in the breast and you will also be given more anaesthetic during the biopsy.

The biopsy needle is inserted to remove tissue using a vacuum assisted device. The device will make whirling and beeping noises during the biopsy.

A small metal clip (titanium) will be inserted to mark the area in case further investigations are needed later. Inserting the clip is painless as the breast is still numb from the local anaesthetic. The clip will stay in the breast and will not cause any harm.

After the biopsy, pressure will be applied to the biopsy site for approximately 10 minutes to help reduce any bruising. After this, steri-strips (dressing strips) and a dry dressing (plaster) will be applied to the biopsy site.

What care must I take after the biopsy?

Please keep the dressing dry for two days. After this time, you can remove the dressing and steri-strips and bath or shower as normal.

Avoid any heavy lifting, running or strenuous activities for the next 48 hrs. If your work is physical please carry out light duties only.

You may experience some discomfort or pain and bruising after the biopsy. If so, paracetamol is recommended. We advise to avoid taking aspirin as this may increase the bruising.

Bruising in the breast after the biopsy is common, most patients heal without any problems. The bruising may make that area of your breast feel hard and lumpy. Wearing a supportive bra may help.

Are there any side effects to the MRI guided biopsy?

Rarely, some patients can have an allergic reaction to the contrast fluid used in breast MRI. The radiographers are all trained to deal with such reactions.

Most biopsy sites heal without any problems, but oozing may occur from the entry site. Should this happen, apply firm pressure for ten minutes and contact your breast care team if you have any concerns.

Some patients may develop a bleed into the breast tissue (haematoma) during the biopsy. A bleed in the breast tissue causes a firm lump that may be painful and swollen. Most haematomas heal without any treatment, but it can take around four to six weeks to disappear and in some cases longer. If you develop this you may be monitored by your breast care team for any signs of infection.

Useful information

When will I get my biopsy appointment?

You will be contacted by the MRI department or radiology breast care nurse by telephone with details of the appointment.

Can I eat and drink on the day of the MRI guided biopsy?

Yes, you can eat and drink as normal.

Do I need to stop any medications?

Before the biopsy you will be contacted by the radiology breast care nurse who will ask you about your medications and complete a health questionnaire.

On the day of the biopsy please take all your medication as you normally would unless you have been advised not to take certain medications that thin the blood (anti-coagulants).

Can I bring someone with me?

Our waiting room is small, but you can bring one person with you for support. Please be aware that they will need to remain in the waiting room during the procedure.

Can I have a breast MRI if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

The changes in the breast tissue because of hormones during pregnancy or breastfeeding make the MRI pictures more difficult to read. Therefore, we do not advise having an MRI during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

It is very important that you tell the radiographer if you are pregnant or think you may be pregnant.

Are MRI scans noisy?

The action of the large magnet in the MRI makes a knocking or drumming noise. This is normal. You will be given headphones to reduce the noise and we can play music through them. You will still be able to hear the radiographer speaking to you.

How will I get my results?

The results of the MRI guided biopsy will be given to you by your referring team breast doctor.

We will advise when you can expect the results. An appointment will be arranged for you.

Contact us

We hope that the information in this leaflet will answer any questions you may have, but please feel free to contact us if you have any queries or concerns:

MRI department: 020 3299 1797

Radiology breast care nurses: 020 3299 3615

Further information can also be found on our Breast Care Unit and Breast Screening service pages:

- www.kch.nhs.uk/services/services-a-to-z/breast-care-unit/
- www.kch.nhs.uk/services/services-a-to-z/breast-screening/

Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit www.kch.nhs.uk.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net