

What is a core biopsy?

A core biopsy is a needle test of breast tissue. This takes a sliver of breast tissue in the area of concern to look at under the microscope to work out what is wrong and what needs to be done.

What happens when the biopsy is taken?

Please let us know if you have had reactions or allergies to antiseptics or local anaesthetics in the past. We also need to know if you are taking medications for blood clotting e.g. aspirin, voltaren, warfarin.

The doctor will clean the area of skin where the biopsy is to be taken from with an antiseptic.

They will then confirm that the correct area can be identified.

Local anaesthetic will be injected to numb both the skin and the area to be biopsied.

As the special core needle is quite blunt normally a small nick will be made in the skin so the needle can be placed into the breast area without lots of pressure.

A special core needle is then placed into the breast. The needle is hollow and has a spring loaded catch to capture a sliver of breast tissue.

When the needle catch is released it makes quite a load popping noise. Before doing the biopsy your doctor will let you listen to this noise.

This will be repeated several times until enough tissue biopsies have been collected. These will be sent to the pathology laboratory for a diagnosis to be made.

The biopsy wound will be covered with a shower proof dressing. You can take this off after 2 days. Please take it off sooner if it irritates your skin.

How long will the biopsy take?

A core biopsy usually takes about 30 minutes.

How long will it be until the results are back?

It usually takes between 1-2 weeks for the results to be available. You should already have an appointment date to come and discuss the results of the biopsies.

Are there any complications?

Bleeding: A small amount of bleeding is common at the time the biopsy is taken and pressure is applied to control this. If blood starts trickling out of the biopsy wound, apply firm pressure over the wound and surrounding area. If the bleeding does not stop after 5 minutes please call your own doctor (GP) for advice.

Bruising: This is common and usually settles over a few days to a week or two.

Infection: An infection rarely happens. Symptoms of an infection include increasing pain in the breast, redness and fever (temperature over 38°C) and feeling unwell please call your own doctor (GP) for advice.

Pain / Discomfort: At the time of the biopsy you were given a local anaesthetic injection to the area to prevent you having pain. Over the next few hours this will wear off and your breast may start to feel a little sore or uncomfortable. Take paracetamol tablets (as required) according to the instructions on the packet. Please avoid taking pain relief that contains Aspirin. If you are taking regular

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pain medication and still have pain your own doctor (GP) for advice.

Non diagnosis: Sometimes the biopsy does not explain what appears to be wrong with your breast in this case the core biopsy may need to be repeated. Sometime we may need to consider a different type of biopsy to get a diagnosis.

When can I go back to work?

You can go back to work after your core biopsy. Do not perform any strenuous activities for 24 -48hrs e.g. aerobic classes, going to the gym

When should I contact you?

Please call us if you notice and have any concerns any bleeding, drainage, excessive pain or redness.

Contact us

Wellington Hospital

Main Outpatients Clinics

Level 2

Wellington Hospital

Monday – Friday 8am to 4.30pm

Phone (04) 8060 358 (Nurse's answerphone)

Kenepuru Hospital

Please phone the Wellington Hospital contact number above.