

# Needle core biopsy: Ultrasound-guided

This document includes information about a type of needle core biopsy that is guided by ultrasound.

## What is an ultrasound-guided biopsy?

A needle core biopsy is a test which removes a small sample of breast tissue for examination under a microscope. It is a safe and simple procedure.

In an ultrasound-guided biopsy, we use ultrasound to find the area of the breast that requires examination and guide the biopsy needle into the correct position. A doctor will perform the biopsy and use a special needle to take the sample.

## What are the limitations of ultrasound-guided biopsy?

Ultrasound-guided biopsy may not provide a definite diagnosis. You may need more tests to confirm or exclude breast cancer.

## What will happen before my biopsy?

Before your biopsy we will ask if you:

- Have any allergies
- Have had a reaction to local anaesthetic in the past
- Are currently taking any blood-thinning medications or medications that make you bleed or bruise easily

## What will happen during my biopsy?

An ultrasound-guided biopsy usually takes about 20 minutes. A nurse counsellor will stay with you for the entire test.

1. We will explain the biopsy process before we begin to make sure you understand what is involved. Please let us know if you have any concerns.
2. We will then ask you to sit upright or lie face down on the ultrasound table.

3. The doctor will use ultrasound to find the area that needs to be sampled.
4. We will clean the skin of your breast using an antiseptic, before injecting local anaesthetic to numb the area.
5. When the area is numb, we will make a tiny cut in the skin and the doctor will insert the biopsy needle into the breast, guided by the ultrasound. You may hear a click or buzz from the biopsy instrument as we take each sample.
6. The doctor may place a tiny metal clip (about 2mm long) into the area of the breast where they have taken the samples. The clip will help us to locate the area again in future. It is typically made of stainless steel or titanium and will not cause any side effects. If you do not need further treatment, the clip can be safely left in your breast – including if you need an MRI or CT scan in the future.
7. We may take some x-ray images of your breast at the end of the test.
8. We will send the samples to a pathologist for examination under a microscope.

## What are the possible side effects of biopsies?

Possible side effects of biopsies include:

### Bruising and bleeding

Bruising is a very common side effect of biopsies. It should disappear in a few days. In rare cases, you may develop a large, deep bruise (haematoma), which is felt as a lump in the breast. This will not require special treatment but can take longer to disappear. You may have some minor bleeding from the cut. This usually stops with compression.

### Pain

Everyone has a different pain tolerance. If you experience pain during your biopsy, please tell your doctor. They will stop the test and discuss options with you.

### Fainting

If you have a history of fainting during medical tests, you should tell the doctor before they begin the biopsy.

### Infection

Infection in the breast after a biopsy is very rare.

### Reaction to local anaesthetic

Allergic reactions to local anaesthetic used for a biopsy are extremely rare.

### What will happen after my biopsy?

When the biopsy is complete, we will apply pressure to the breast to help stop any bruising. You will not require any stitches. We will put Steri-Strips and a waterproof dressing on the incision. We will also give you an ice pack.

You may need to wait up to 30 minutes after your biopsy so we can make sure you are okay before you leave.

### What should I do when I get home?

When you get home, you may wish to take some over-the-counter pain medication such as paracetamol. An ice pack may also reduce discomfort from any pain or bruising.

You should avoid strenuous exercise and heavy lifting for 24 to 48 hours after your biopsy to minimise bruising and discomfort. You may also like to wear a bra to bed for extra support.

The dressings we use are waterproof, so you can shower as normal. You can remove the dressing after 3 days.

### When will I get my results?

Results from your biopsy may take up to 1 week. After your test, we will book a follow-up appointment to discuss your results with you.

### When should I contact you?

If you have any concerns after your biopsy, please contact BreastScreen Victoria or your doctor. For problems after business hours, you may wish to go to the Emergency Department at your closest hospital. We encourage you to seek medical advice if you have:

- Bleeding that doesn't stop with compression
- A red, swollen or tender breast



**If you have chest pain or shortness of breath in the 24 hours following your biopsy, you should go to the Emergency Department at your closest hospital immediately.**

**Assessment clinic address:**

**Next appointment:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Book at  
breastscreen.org.au  
or call 13 20 50**

**TTY 13 36 77** if you have hearing or speech difficulties



For more information or to change your details, visit **breastscreen.org.au** or call **13 20 50**



For interpreter assistance, call **13 14 50**



Translated information:  
**breastscreen.org.au/translations**



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