

# Vacuum-Assisted Stereotactic core biopsy of the breast

Radiology Department



Patient information leaflet

This leaflet provides you with information about our vacuum assisted stereotactic core biopsy service. It explains what is involved and who you will meet.

## The Radiology Department

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Radiology is also known as the X-Ray or Imaging Department.

## Who will I meet?

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**Receptionist/Clerical Staff:** to help you make or change your imaging appointment and ensure your details are correct when you arrive for your appointment.

**Radiographer:** female radiographers will assist the radiologist.

**Radiologist/Breast Clinician:** a specialist doctor trained to take a small sample of your breast tissue. They also interpret images and report them for your consultant.

## What is a Stereotactic Core Biopsy?

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A core biopsy (biopsy) is a way of taking a tissue sample using a biopsy needle. The tissue sample will help the doctors make a diagnosis for you.

Stereotactic means that x-rays are used to take images of the breast before and during the biopsy, and in this procedure a vacuum device is used to help obtain the tissue samples.

## Are there any risks in having a vacuum-assisted stereotactic biopsy?

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There are some slight risks associated with any needle test.

These include bruising, bleeding, soreness and possibly swelling at the test site.

There will be a small scar over the needle entry site. Occasionally the breast may change shape due to scarring.

There is a chance the tissue sample removed will not provide enough material for a diagnosis and you may need another procedure.

Very rarely, an infection may occur at the biopsy site.

X-rays are used to image the area to be sampled. The amount of ionising radiation used is equal to what we receive from the environment over a short period of time.

If you have any queries about the need for this test please contact your referring doctor.

## **What preparation is required?**

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- It is important that you do not wear talcum powder, deodorant, antiperspirant or body lotion on your breasts or under your arms.
- If you take blood thinning medication such as Warfarin, aspirin or Clopidogrel, please tell us before taking up your appointment. In addition, if you are having regular blood tests to check your INR (International Normalised Ratio), please bring your results card with you to your appointment.
- Please note we have no provision for child care.

## **Is there an alternative test?**

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An alternative would be to have a surgical excision, where the lesion is removed in an operating theatre under a general anaesthetic. This involves hospital admission and recovery time will be longer, the scar may also be larger.

## **Can I bring a relative or a friend?**

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Yes, but for safety reasons they cannot accompany you into the examination room, except in very special circumstances.

## **What will happen when I arrive?**

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- Please report to the Radiology reception desk.
- You will be asked to have a seat in our waiting area before being called into the mammography room.

## **What does the vacuum-assisted stereotactic biopsy involve?**

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Once you are in the privacy of the mammogram room, the radiologist will explain the procedure to you and obtain your written consent before starting the examination.

You will be asked to undress to the waist and lie on your side, or sit on the examination couch. The radiographers will position your breast in the x-ray machine. They will apply some compression to your breast so that it is held still.

X-ray images of your breast will now be taken. These will be looked at by the radiologist to make sure the correct area of your breast has been located.

The equipment can take a few minutes to set up, during which time you will need to keep as still as possible. The vacuum machine is quite noisy whilst in use.

The radiologist will clean the skin over the area to be sampled. Local anaesthetic will be injected to numb the area.

A small cut is then made in the skin and the biopsy needle is inserted into that area to remove some tissue. Several tissue samples are usually taken. When the radiologist has finished taking samples a small metal clip will be placed in the breast. It is used to identify the area from where the sample has been obtained and it can be seen on future mammograms. The marker is harmless and causes no discomfort. The compression is released, and before the biopsied area is cleaned and dressed, the radiographer will apply firm pressure to minimise any bruising/bleeding.

The tissue samples are then sent to the pathology labs to be looked at using a microscope.

## **Will the vacuum-assisted stereotactic biopsy hurt?**

The local anaesthetic injection will involve a small needle and may sting while it takes effect. You may also feel a “pulling sensation” as the sample is removed. More local anaesthetic can be given at any stage if you feel uncomfortable. The local anaesthetic used may contain adrenalin, please inform us prior to the injection if this will be a problem.

## **How long will it take?**

Most stereotactic biopsies take about 50 to 60 minutes.

## **Are there any side effects?**

There is usually some localised bruising. You may wish to take paracetamol once the local anaesthetic wears off. Some patients find it helps to support the breast with a bra.

We recommend that you don't do any vigorous exercise, go swimming, or return to work if your occupation involves heavy lifting.

We will explain this to you and give you a written information sheet on your post biopsy care.

## **When will I get the results?**

You will need to make an appointment to see your consultant for the test results one week later.

## **Privacy and dignity**

We will try to make your visit to our department as comfortable as we can.

## Patient survey

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We value your opinion about the service we provide. Please help us to improve the service by answering the voluntary questionnaire included with your appointment letter.

## Reference sources

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- [www.insideradiology.com.au/vacuum-assisted-core-biopsy/](http://www.insideradiology.com.au/vacuum-assisted-core-biopsy/)
- [www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/breast-cancer/getting-diagnosed/tests-diagnose/vacuum-assisted-biopsy](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/breast-cancer/getting-diagnosed/tests-diagnose/vacuum-assisted-biopsy)

For further information about Diagnostic Imaging Services at Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, please contact:

### **Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

Egerton Road  
Guildford  
Surrey  
GU2 7XX

[www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk](http://www.royalsurrey.nhs.uk)

## Useful websites

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- Nice guidelines: [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

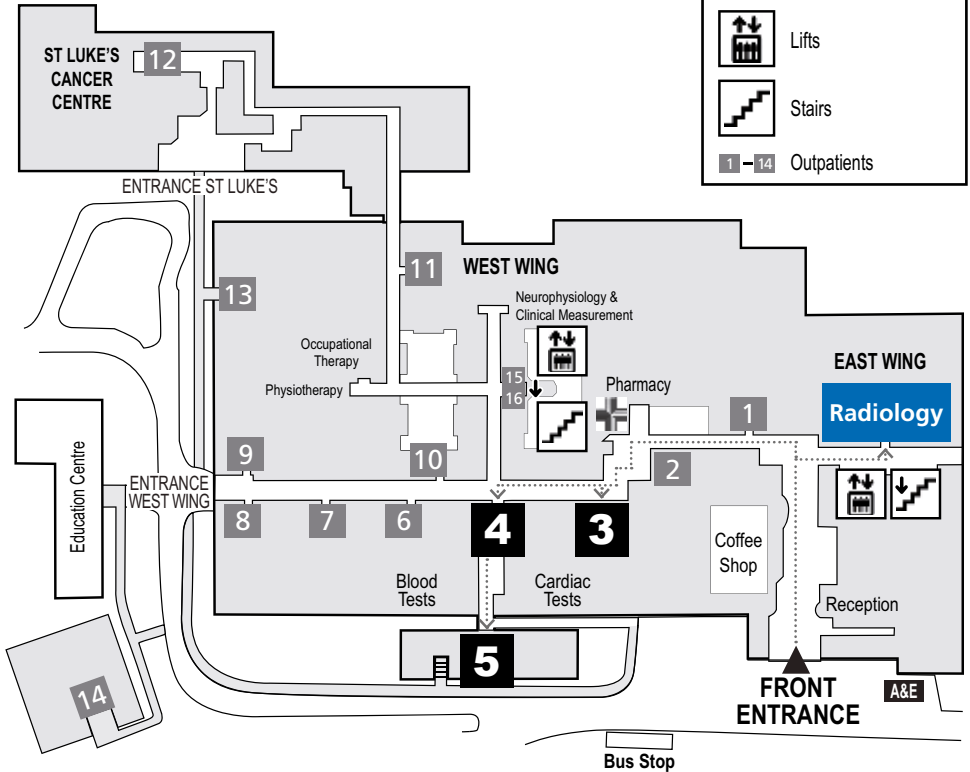
# How to find the Radiology Department

Royal Surrey County Hospital map

**Level B (Ground floor)**

**KEY**

- ↑ 1 To clinics on next floor (above or below)
- ↑↓ Lifts
- ↗ Stairs
- 1-14 Outpatients



## Contact details

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If you have any questions or would like to know more about mammography, please contact the Radiology Department.

**Telephone:** 01483 571122 **ext** 4596 2050 or

**Direct line:** 01483 464150 (9am–5pm)

**If you are unable to keep your appointment, please contact us as soon as possible.**

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## PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Future review date: February 2021

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