

Patient information

The Breast One-Stop Clinic

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

If you need general information or advice about Trust services, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 020 3594 2040 or visit www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/pals. Alternatively please contact staff who are providing your care if you require clinical advice.

Large print and other languages

For this leaflet in large print, please speak to your clinical team.
For help interpreting this leaflet in other languages, please ring 020 8223 8934.

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All our patient information leaflets are reviewed every three years.

Breast Unit
1st Floor, West Wing
St Bartholomew's Hospital
London
EC1A 7BE

Telephone: 020 3465 5644 or 020 3465 6616



Welcome to the One-Stop Breast Clinic

This leaflet explains why you have been asked to see us and what you should expect to happen whilst you are here. We hope it will help you prepare for your visit.

You are welcome to bring a family member, partner or a friend with you to your appointment. If you need to bring a young baby or child to your appointment, please ensure a responsible adult is with you to look after the child. If you have diabetes, please ensure you bring a snack with you to maintain your well-being.

Before you are seen in clinic, your referral letter will have been reviewed and a range of tests you need will have been arranged specifically for you.

Where is the one-stop clinic?

You will find us on the first floor of the West Wing building at St Bartholomew's Hospital, West Smithfield, London EC1A 7BE. There are toilets on each floor and baby changing facilities on the ground floor and second floor.

Who will I meet?

We are a large team of specialist doctors, nurses, radiographers and other team members who all work together to investigate, treat and care for patients with breast conditions. You will meet the team when you visit the clinic during your appointment.

How long will my appointment take?

Please be prepared to spend the whole morning in the clinic as you may need further tests while you are here.

Will there be any support available to me when I attend?

A breast care nurse is available if needed at the hospital to support you and answer any questions you may have.

However if you need to change it please do so as soon as you can by calling our administrators above.

Where can I find out further information?

You can find out further information about your breast care at <https://www.breastcancercare.org.uk>

Telephone 0808 800 6000

Monday-Friday 09:00 – 17:00

Monday and Wednesday 17:00 – 19:00

Saturday 0900 – 13:00

Will I be asked to take part in any research?

The Breast Unit at Barts is at the forefront of breast cancer research care and we are committed to researching new treatments to improve the patient experience and outcomes. As such you may be invited to take part in a clinical study. Participation is entirely voluntary and if you decide not to take part, it will not affect the standard of clinical care you receive.

What if I am told I may have cancer?

For some of our patients the tests will show that the breast changes are cancerous. We understand how difficult it must be to hear this news and we will do everything we can to support you during this time. If you receive a diagnosis of breast cancer you will have an opportunity to discuss your treatment plan with your doctor, and meet a breast nurse specialist who will make sure you have the information, advice and support that you need.

How can I arrange transport?

Transport is generally for those who use mobility aids and who are therefore unable to take public transport safely. If you need to book transport to and/or from hospital for your appointment please call the Travel Shop on **0203 465 5121 (Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.50pm)**. This must be done at least **48 hours** before your appointment day. If you cancel or rearrange your appointment please remember to call the Travel Shop.

What if I need an interpreter?

If you need to book an interpreter, please contact the breast one-stop clinic administrators on the 3rd floor on 0203 465 5644 or 0203 465 6616 to arrange this for you.

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

You can contact the breast one-stop clinic administrators on 0203 465 5644 or 0203 465 6616.

It is very important that you keep your appointment to see us.

Why have I been asked to attend the one-stop clinic?

Your doctor has asked you to visit our clinic because of your breast symptoms. In most cases changes in the breast are benign, or non-cancerous, but any breast symptoms must be checked out fully by our specialist breast care team to confirm what these changes are.

How will my privacy and dignity be maintained?

Maintaining our patients' dignity is very important to us. We will offer you a hospital gown between tests and examinations and a dressing gown if required. Please feel free to cover yourself with your own clothes, for example a jacket; if you need to walk or sit anywhere in a public area once in your gown. We are more than happy for you to wear your own clothes throughout, but try to wear a top that is quick to remove so we can examine you more easily.

There will always be a female staff member present during any examination or test that you may have. Our priority is to make sure that you are seen by a specialist in breast care so unfortunately we cannot guarantee that there will only be female doctors present as some of our staff members are male. You are able to have a friend or relative present in the room for your consultation.

What will happen during my appointment?

Please check in at reception on arrival. Before you arrive, your case will have been reviewed by a doctor and a plan made according to your individual symptoms. You may see the doctor at this stage to talk through your medical history and your breast symptoms, or be asked to go straight to the imaging department on the second floor for some tests. Depending on your symptoms, you may have some or all of the tests described in this leaflet.

1. A physical examination by a doctor

The doctor may examine your breasts and feel for any enlarged lymph nodes under your arms and at the base of your neck.

2. Mammogram

A mammogram is a special low dose (digital) x-ray of the breasts. It helps doctors identify any changes to the breast, such as a new lump or other changes in the breast that may not be felt by hand examination.

Please be aware that a mammogram is not suitable for every patient.

Having the mammogram

Your mammogram will be taken by a female mammographer (an expert in taking breast x-rays). Please inform the mammographer if you are currently breast feeding.

You will be asked to undress down to the waist and stand in front of the mammogram machine. One breast at a time will be positioned onto the machine before it is gently but firmly compressed for a few seconds, in order to keep the breast in place and to get a clear picture of all the breast tissue.

X-rays of the breast will be taken from at least two positions so that the breast tissue can be viewed from different angles.

Some patients find having a mammogram uncomfortable or painful but it is necessary to compress the breasts sufficiently in order to produce clear pictures.

Risks

The radiation dose for a mammogram is very low, similar to that received on a long-haul flight.

any treatment and further care you may require is appropriate to your needs.

How will I get my results?

You will be contacted either by telephone your letter to discuss your results. Please make sure before you leave the clinic that we have your current contact details.

If you have waited three weeks after your tests and have not had your results then please contact the breast team on 020 3465 6635. You may need to leave a message, giving your name, hospital number and contact details on this number. The office is staffed from Monday to Friday between 9:00 and 17:00 and the messages are checked at 09:00 and 13:00 on each working day. You will be phoned back by a member of the breast team by the end of the next working day.

Further tests

Occasionally, once the results of your tests are known, the breast team may ask you to return to the department for further tests to complete your assessment.

Does this mean something is wrong?

Further tests are sometimes needed if the initial tests did not give the multi-disciplinary team enough information for them to be absolutely sure. The vast majority of patients that are called back at this stage are reassured once the results of the tests are known.

What further tests will I have?

You may have a repeat of a previous test but from a different angle or with a different technique. Alternatively you may have some of the other tests shown throughout this leaflet. The further tests that you are due to have will be explained to you by a member of the team when you attend.

swelling. This should not be placed directly onto your skin because the low temperature may burn and cause blisters. Wrap the cold pack in a towel before applying it to your skin.

Bleeding or infection

If bleeding or swelling occurs, lie down and press firmly on the area using a sterile dressing or a clean pad, for 10 minutes. This action should normally be sufficient to resolve the problem.

If the bleeding or swelling continues after you have tried these steps or if you notice redness or discharge (pus) from the wound please seek medical advice from your GP.

Getting your results

You may get your x-ray results on the same day of your appointment. If you have had a biopsy you will receive these results at a later date, depending on the type of tests you have had.

Waiting for results

We understand that this is an anxious time for you and the department will do it all can to minimise the wait for the results of your tests. However please be aware that results can occasionally take up to three weeks before they are available. This is because:

- Complex x-rays are often reviewed by more than one radiologist to ensure that any potential abnormality is appropriately identified
- Biopsies need to be analysed in a laboratory to see what the breast tissue contains
- Test results are discussed in a weekly meeting of the multi-disciplinary team of breast specialists, including breast surgeons, radiologists, breast care nurses and histopathologists, who specialise in breast biopsy analysis. This is done to ensure that the test results are agreed and that

3. Other tests

Ultrasound scan

An ultrasound scan uses (non x-ray) sound waves to produce an image of the breast tissue.

Ultrasound scans are sometimes carried out in addition to mammograms as they provide different information. An ultrasound scan is painless and usually takes a few minutes.

You will be asked to undress to the waist and lie on a couch with your arm above your head. To help gain a clear image of the breast, some gel will be spread over the area of your breast being scanned. The radiologist will use a hand-held scanning probe which will be moved over your breast to look at the underlying breast tissue. The area under your arm (axilla) may also be scanned.

Breast biopsies

Sometimes the radiologist, in addition to performing an ultrasound scan, will take a biopsy (a small sample of cells or tissues) from your breast. The biopsy sample will be sent to a laboratory so that it can be examined to see what it contains.

Before having any biopsy please tell the radiologist or nurse if you are currently taking any medicine to thin your blood. Examples are Warfarin, Heparin, Clopidogrel, Aspirin or any pain killers that contain Aspirin. Please also inform the radiologist or nurse if you have any allergies.

Fine needle aspiration

The doctor may use a very thin needle and a syringe to take a sample of cells from the area that has been scanned. This is a quick test which may be uncomfortable. After the test you may need to wear a plaster for a few hours over the area where the needle was inserted.

There are different ways of taking biopsies. The radiologist will

explain to you which type of biopsy you will have. The following section describes the different types of biopsies that take place in the department.

Core biopsy

A core biopsy uses a larger needle to obtain some samples of tissue from the area of concern. Before taking the biopsy your skin will be cleaned using an alcohol-based solution and then the radiologist will inject the area with a local anaesthetic to numb it. The radiologist will then make a small cut in the skin so that samples of tissues can be taken. The biopsy device will be placed through the cut and the biopsies will be taken.

Stereotactic core biopsy

If you have had a mammogram taken you may have a stereotactic (x-ray guided) core biopsy. There is where a core biopsy is taken with the help of the mammogram machine linked to a computer. This helps the radiologist to check the exact position of the area that needs to be biopsied. Images of the breast are taken from two different angles to help guide the needle to the appropriate area. The test may be done while you are sitting down or while you lie down on a special examination couch. It may feel a little uncomfortable as your breast will be compressed throughout the biopsy.

Vacuum assisted biopsy

A vacuum assisted biopsy is similar to a core biopsy. After a local anaesthetic injection (to numb the area) the radiologist will insert an instrument which is connected to a vacuum device. Breast tissue is drawn through the probe into a chamber (which allows several tissue samples to be taken while the probe is in place). Occasionally a small metal clip is placed in the breast where the biopsy was taken. This is so the area can be found again if further biopsies are needed or if surgery is required. The clip can be safely left in the breast as it will not cause an allergic reaction, will not rust and will not be detected by an airport metal detector or by

an MRI scanner.

Breast care after a biopsy

The radiologist will discuss with you what to do if you take any medicine that thins the blood.

Pain relief

You may experience some discomfort immediately following your biopsy or after the local anaesthetic wears off. If this happens we advise that you take simple painkillers such as Paracetamol.

NB: Do not take Aspirin or any non-steroidal painkillers, such as Ibuprofen, as this could increase the risk of bleeding.

Exercise

Avoid strenuous exercise, including heavy housework or lifting, for 48 hours following your biopsy. Light activity can continue as normal.

Bathing

You may shower or bathe with your dressing but try to keep the dressing dry for 48 hours.

Removing your dressing

- Remove the outer dressing 48 hours after your biopsy. You may find it easier to do this by soaking it off in the shower or bath
- No further dressing will be required
- Remove the steri-strips (paper stitches) five days after your biopsy

Bruising and swelling

Some bruising and discomfort at the biopsy site is normal and usually heals within a month. Sometimes it can take slightly longer. Applying a cold pack to the area can reduce pain and