

# Vacuum Assisted Excision Procedure

This leaflet explains what is involved with a Vacuum Assisted Excision (VACE) procedure. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

## How will I get a date for a Vacuum Assisted Excision (VACE)?

The breast care nurses will contact you within the next two weeks with an appointment date and time for the procedure.

## What do I need to do before a Vacuum Assisted Excision (VACE)?

There is no special preparation required. You can eat and drink normally. Please bring a list of your medication with you and make sure you take any regular medication as usual. You will find it helpful to wear a separate top and skirt or trousers. After the procedure we recommend you wear a non-wired supportive bra.

It is important that you tell us if you have any allergies or are having any treatment or medicine to thin your blood.

## Asking for your consent

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your care. When you arrive, the Clinician will explain the procedure to you. Feel free to ask any questions you may have. You will be asked to give your verbal consent to say that you agree to have the procedure and understand what it involves. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask for a copy of our policy.

## Will I feel any pain?

The Clinician will inject local anaesthetic into that part of your breast. The injection will feel like a pinprick and may sting for a few seconds before the area goes numb.

## What happens during the procedure?

The Clinician will use the mammogram machine or ultrasound to target the area of breast tissue for the procedure. The procedure may be done with you either sitting or lying down. The Clinician will then make a little cut in the skin, then pass the needle through the cut. The needle stays in the breast while several tissue samples are taken. A small amount of suction is used to facilitate the removal of the tissue sample from the breast. This procedure should not be painful but you may feel a pushing sensation. All the tissue removed is sent to the pathology department for examination.

## What is a breast marker?

We may want to place a very small metal marker in the breast to show where the procedure has been done. The marker clip is inserted at the time of the procedure. Inserting it is painless as the breast will still be numb from the local anaesthetic. You will not be able to feel the marker clip or be aware of it in your breast either at the time of the procedure or later on. The marker will remain in your breast and will not cause you any harm. It will be seen on any future breast ultrasound scans or mammograms (breast x-rays). Although made of metal, the marker clip is

MRI compatible. This means that if you ever need an MRI scan the marker clip will not cause any problem.

If you have any allergies to metal please tell us before this procedure.

## **What happens at the end of the procedure?**

When the procedure is completed, the assistant will press firmly over the area for about 15 minutes to help stop any bleeding. Adhesive strips will be used to close the little cut on your breast and this will then be covered with a dressing. You will need to stay in the department for half an hour. This is to check that there is no bleeding at the procedure site before you go home.

## **What can I expect after the procedure?**

The adhesive strips and dressing should be left on and kept dry for two to three days. You may then remove them.

After any medical procedure you may experience some side effects. The possible side effects are explained here.

### **Bruising**

Bruising is very common after this procedure. Bruising may make that part of your breast feel lumpy or may affect a wider area. On rare occasions there can be severe bruising. This may affect most of the breast and can take several weeks to resolve.

### **Bleeding**

Occasionally the procedure site can start bleeding again after you have left the screening unit. If this happens, apply firm pressure over the area for 20 minutes. Contact the screening unit or your GP if the bleeding has not stopped after 20 minutes. If you are unable to contact the screening unit or your GP, please seek advice from your local NHS Walk-In-Centre or A & E department.

### **Discomfort**

Any aching or tenderness in your breast should be relieved by taking a painkiller such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Avoid taking aspirin for the first 24 hours as it thins the blood. You may find it more comfortable to wear a non-wired supportive bra day and night for two days. After this procedure you can resume normal activities but avoid heavy lifting or exercise for 48 hours to reduce the risk of complications. If your work involves heavy lifting we would recommend that you take a couple of days off. You may continue to get brief episodes of pain or discomfort in the breast. This can continue for many months after the procedure.

### **Tethering**

Very rarely the wound caused by the biopsy heals in such a way that the breast tissue changes shape, potentially causing a dimple or crease at the biopsy site. This is called tethering and this rare complication may occur up to a few months after the biopsy is taken.

## **How will I get the results of the procedure?**

After the procedure you will be given an appointment with the surgical team at St George's Breast Clinic.

## When will I get the results?

We will arrange an appointment for you to get your results with the breast surgical team at St George's Hospital. This appointment is usually 10 to 14 days after the procedure. Occasionally the result may be delayed and if this happens we will attempt to contact you to arrange a new appointment.

## Contact us

If you have any questions about the procedure please contact our Clinical Nurse Specialists on 020 8725 2726 Monday - Friday (24 hour answer phone).

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

---

## Additional services

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111



**Reference:** CSC\_VACE\_01 **Published:** April 2019 **Review date:** April 2021