

Patient information

Information about your breast excision under x-ray guidance (Vacuum Assisted Excision)

What is a Vacuum assisted excision (VAE)?

It is a procedure used to remove further samples of tissue from an area in your breast that has previously been biopsied. This is performed using a needle attached to a vacuum (suctioning) device. The sample will then be sent to the lab for analysis.

Why do I need a VAE?

There has been an area within your breast tissue identified from a previous biopsy that requires further assessment to allow for a diagnosis.

Who will I see?

The examination will be performed by either a Consultant Radiographer or Clinical Specialist Radiographer.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

There is no preparation needed for this examination, however we do suggest that you eat before the appointment.

- Please inform staff if you have any blood clotting problems or are on blood thinning medicines such as Warfarin.
- Please let staff know when you arrive if you have any known allergies.
- You may wish to bring a relative or friend to wait with you. However, they will not be allowed into the room during the procedure. Unfortunately, we do not have childcare facilities so please do not bring children with you.

What happens when I arrive?

Please attend the **Breast Imaging** department on the ground floor of the hospital where the receptionist will check your personal details.

You will be asked to undress to the waist and put on a hospital gown.

You will be asked to sign a consent form as part of the surgical procedure.

You will be taken into the x-ray room and staff will explain the procedure and answer any questions.

You will be asked to either sit or lay on a chair and further images will be taken to locate the area for the VAE.

The skin will then be cleaned, and a small amount of local anaesthetic will be injected into the skin, this may sting for a few seconds. The area will feel numb.

The biopsy device will be inserted into your breast using x-rays to guide it, this is attached to a vacuum which uses gentle suction to allow sampling of the breast tissue. You will hear the machine working as samples are taken.

It is important that you stay still during the procedure.

It is necessary to mark where the biopsy is taken. This is done using a small titanium/gel clip that can locate the area in the future. You will not be able to feel the marker and they do not cause any problems with MRI scanners or airport/metal detectors.

Will it hurt?

Local anaesthetic may cause stinging before it numbs the breast, but this should only last a few seconds. You may feel some pressure during the procedure, but you should not feel any pain. If you do feel pain, tell the person doing the procedure.

How long will it take?

The examination should last approximately 40-60 minutes.

After the examination:

As soon as the VAE has finished, we will apply firm pressure to the breast for 10 minutes to stop any bleeding and reduce the risk of bruising. A pressure dressing will then be placed over the breast area. This should stay on for 24 hours.

Please tell us if you have allergies to plasters or dressings.

- The anaesthetic will wear off after 2-3 hours.
- The breast may be sore and tender for several days. This can be relieved by taking a painkiller such as paracetamol. Avoid taking ibuprofen as this can increase any bruising or swelling.
- We recommend that you wear a non-wired supportive bra after the procedure.
- You will be offered a drink after the procedure and stay in the department for 15 minutes. We will check the dressing before you leave.
- You may eat and drink as normal following the procedure and resume your normal activities, although it is advised to avoid going to the gym or heavy lifting for the next 48 hours.
- Do not allow your pressure dressing to get wet in the shower or bath for the first 24 hours.
- After 24 hours, apply a small plaster if necessary and bath/shower as usual.

Following the procedure, you will have a small scar on the skin where the VAE was performed.

When will I get my results?

Before you leave the department, we will give you information about when you can expect your results, this is typically within 2 weeks of the procedure.

It may be helpful for you to bring a relative or friend to the results appointment.

Are there any risks or complications?

As with every medical procedure the risk must be compared to the benefit of having the procedure carried out.

The most common side effects are bruising and slight bleeding. Some patients may experience continued bleeding and swelling. In rare cases an infection can occur at the site.

If you experience any problems after your VAE please contact your GP.

Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017

The Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 states we must inform you of the use and risks of radiation.

Although any test that involves x-rays carries a small risk, the radiation dose for this examination is small. Please be assured that we always aim to keep radiation exposures as low as possible.

If you have any questions, please speak to the radiographer carrying out your examination.

Feedback:

Please tell us about your experience following your appointment. You can email PALS@wsh.nhs.uk

Data Protection information

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust will manage your information in line with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. The information you provide will be retained for the purposes of your healthcare. The information will be retained in line with the *NHS Records Management Code of Practice for Health & Social care*.

You have rights in relation to the way we process your information. If you no longer want us to use your information for the purposes specified above; if you want to request to have your information erased or rectified, please contact the Information Governance team on 01284 713454 or email info.gov@wsh.nhs.uk

We will review all requests in relation to your rights under GDPR, along with our responsibilities for record keeping.

Images may be used for research purposes as well as teaching. Patients must inform a member of staff if they do not consent to this.

As part of a shared service agreement with other NHS organisations, your radiology images and records may be shared with these other organisations as part of determining and providing your care. If you would like to know more about the extent of this sharing, or you wish us not to share at all with another organisation, or have any other concerns about it, please contact a member of staff.

Further information can be found at: [Protecting your information \(GDPR\) \(wsh.nhs.uk\)](#)

**If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities, please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>**



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