

The one stop breast clinic

This clinic is organised so that you can see the doctor and have any necessary tests in the shortest time possible.

Ideally, you will also have the results of the investigations the same day, but in some cases you may have to return within a week to the breast clinic.

On arrival

- First, please book in with the receptionist.
- You will see a specialist doctor, who will discuss your breast problem with you and examine you.
- He/she will agree with you which tests you should have and these can be arranged straight away.
- The tests may take up to 2½ hours.

Don't forget that 9 out of 10 women with a breast problem or lump, do not have cancer.

If you wish to talk to the **breast care nurse**, for advice on breast care please ask the receptionist for details.

What tests/investigations?

• Mammogram

A mammogram is an x-ray of your breasts. Women over 35 will almost always have this test in the first place.

Ask for the mammogram leaflet.

• Ultrasound

An ultrasound examination is a painless way of obtaining a picture of the inside of your breast without using x-rays.

This is a useful test for younger women – and it may be the only test needed. For women over 35 this test may be done as well as a mammogram.

Ask for the ultrasound leaflet.

You will usually have the results of the ultrasound and mammogram tests before you leave the clinic.

• Fine needle aspiration

This involves the doctor passing a needle into the breast to take out fluid from a cyst (pockets of fluid) or to take out a tiny sample of the breast tissue itself, for investigation in the laboratory.

Some women find this uncomfortable, but it only takes a few moments.

• Core Biopsy

This involves taking a thicker sample of the breast lump using a larger needle, particularly when the diagnosis is uncertain.

You should have the results of this test within five working days at your next visit to the clinic.

At the clinic the doctor will discuss the results of your tests with you and the options for treatment.

Common problems seen in the breast clinic

- **Fibroadenoma** - this is a harmless, smooth, movable lump, which usually occurs in young women between the ages of 20 - 30 years.
- **Lumpiness of the breast** - this may come and go during the cycle but is most common just before your period.
- **Mastalgia** - this is breast pain, which often occurs at certain times in the monthly cycle (usually just before your period) or can occur at any time. It is most common in women between the ages of 30 - 50 and very rarely in cases of breast cancer.

- **Cysts** - these are harmless, pockets of fluid, and can be drained by fine needle aspiration.
- **Breast duct problems** - the ducts (small drainage tubes leading to the nipple) can get enlarged and inflamed, hot and painful (mastitis). There may be a discharge from the nipple and sometimes abscesses form.
- **Breast abscess** - mainly associated with breast-feeding.
- **Excessive breast size in adolescence** - which can simply be the beginning of breast development, which often starts on one side before the other.
- **Breast cancer.**

Follow up and care after attending the clinic

Despite all these tests it is still possible that a breast cancer is missed. If you think that your lump increases in size or seems to become harder then please phone appointments on 0207 288 5511 or contact the breast care nurse.

For further information

If you have any more questions please phone the breast care nurse on 020 7272 3070 and ask for bleep 3166, Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm.

The Whittington Hospital 
NHS Trust

Department of Surgery

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