Information About Your Breast Care Centre Appointment
Welcome to the Breast Care Centre at Southmead Hospital.
You have been referred to us for a specialist opinion of your problem.

If you are unable to keep your appointment please call to let us know as soon as possible.

What will happen at my appointment?
Please book in with the receptionist when you arrive.

We will make every effort to see you on time. There can be delays if doctors are called away for emergencies or a patient needs more time than expected. When you book in, the receptionist will let you know if there are any delays. The time delay will be displayed on the notice boards in the waiting room.

Your appointment will consist of a physical examination of your breast by a doctor, and then some or all of the following tests:

- ultrasound
- mammogram
- fine needle aspiration
- core biopsy

The clinician will discuss with you which of the above tests that you will require. Not every woman/man will require all four tests. On the whole these are performed on the same day, but you may need to return for a mammogram on a separate occasion. This depends on the clinician’s decision if this is not an urgently required test.
A proportion of women and men who are referred to our service do not require a needle biopsy test. It may be possible for the clinician to inform you of the findings from the ultrasound and mammogram (if required) as well as discuss any treatment options, if necessary. If a needle biopsy is necessary you may be asked to return for the results the following week. Sometimes it is possible to receive your results by telephone, text or letter. The clinician will discuss which is the best way for you to receive these results.

What do the different tests involve?

**Ultrasound**
This is a painless investigation, done by the doctor in clinic. A gel will be applied to your breast and a sensor gently moved over your skin. A picture of the breast tissue is built up on screen to help the specialist with the diagnosis.

**Mammogram**
This is a breast x-ray which is done in the breast care centre. Each breast is held firmly between 2 x-ray plates for a few seconds. Some women find this uncomfortable. It takes about 30 minutes including the development of the x-ray films.

**Fine needle aspiration**
This is a quick and simple test, similar to a blood test. A few cells from a breast lump or thickening are drawn off using a syringe with a very fine needle.

**Core Biopsy**
The clinician often decides, depending on your ultrasound, to obtain a small sample of tissue from the breast as opposed to a few cells (fine needle aspiration). A core biopsy will provide more information by informing the clinician, as well as yourself, exactly what the condition is within your breast. These results take between a week and 10 days, depending on the
information required. You will be given an appointment to return at at later date. The needle is slightly larger so a local anaesthetic is used to numb the area of your breast.

**Helpful information before your appointment.**
You will need to undress to the waist during your appointment, so please wear something you can easily slip on and off.

You may bring your partner or a friend with you if you wish. You might also like to bring something to read while you are waiting.

There is both a water dispenser and hot drinks facilities also available in the department.

If you need any more information about your appointment or tests, please telephone one of the Breast Care Nurses.

**How to get here**
Please also find attached details as to how to find us, entering either gate to the hospital.

Your GP will arrange transport for your first visit if it is necessary on medical grounds. The Breast Care Centre will arrange any further bookings.

If you wish to make any comments about your visit to the clinic please write to the Breast Care Centre after your appointment.
References
NHS Executive (2002) Improving Outcomes in Breast Cancer

NHS Constitution. Information on your rights and responsibilities. Available at www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/constitution
If you or the individual you are caring for need support reading this leaflet please ask a member of staff for advice.

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