



## When do I get the results?

Your care team will advise you when and how you will receive your results.

If it is a one stop clinic you may get the results of the biopsy the same day. This will require some waiting so this is a good time to go get a coffee and try to relax.

Other hospitals may need to send the samples away and so you will be given another appointment soon after. Again, **consider taking someone with you** to this appointment.

If the lump is clearly not cancerous and/or no biopsy needed, the doctor may be able to tell you the results straight away.

Waiting for results is a difficult time and you may feel like your life is on hold. It is common to feel anxious so try to find someone you can talk to. The breast nurses are used to dealing with worries and concerns so don't be afraid to get in touch with them.

## What if I do have cancer?

The discussion surrounding treatment can sometimes start in the same appointment as your results. This is important to remember if you are at a one stop clinic, as this can feel overwhelming after a day full of tests.

Your treatment will depend on the type of breast cancer you have, and your care team may need to carry out some further investigations to ensure you receive the best treatment available for you.

## Telling others

You may find it useful to watch Karen's video on how she told her family, including her two daughters. Either scan the QR code overleaf on your smartphone or visit our website.

### Meet Karen

Karen is a GP and Against Breast Cancer's first ever sports ambassador.

"At the start of 2019, I signed up for my first marathon. But just 6 weeks before the event, I was diagnosed with secondary spread breast cancer. I decided that whatever was going to happen, I was going to run the marathon and raise money and awareness for Against Breast Cancer. Since completing my first marathon, I have committed to running another three in a calendar year!"



Learn more about Karen and watch her vlogs by scanning the QR code below on your smartphone. On iPhone, open camera, scan the QR code and open the pop-up link.

### About Against Breast Cancer

Against Breast Cancer funds groundbreaking research to improve detection, treatment and increase survival after breast cancer diagnosis. The focus of our research is preventing secondary spread, the main cause of breast cancer related deaths.

We fund research towards:

**Prevention** – how diet and lifestyle may increase or reduce the risk of secondary breast cancer developing to provide sound, evidence-based advice relevant to a UK population.

**Detection** – how to design better tools for earlier diagnosis of secondary breast cancer to increase survival rates.

**Therapies** – how the body's natural defences could be harnessed to design more effective treatments and ultimately a vaccine against breast cancer.

#### Against Breast Cancer

Leathem House, 13 Napier Court, Barton Lane  
Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3YT

T: 01235 534211 | E: [info@againstbreastcancer.org.uk](mailto:info@againstbreastcancer.org.uk)

[www.againstbreastcancer.org.uk](http://www.againstbreastcancer.org.uk)

**AGAINST**  
breast cancer

# Something isn't right with my breast...

Explaining the investigative and referral process so you know what to expect



This leaflet was produced by Against Breast Cancer in collaboration with Karen Gregory (Arney). It is intended to supplement, not replace information from your doctor.

## Should I see my GP?

Yes, if you experience any of the symptoms below you should **see your doctor**.

- Lumps/thickening in chest, breast or armpit.  
*This is the first sign in 80-90% of cases*
- Dimpling on the skin of your breasts
- Nipple discharge or bleeding from the nipple
- Change in breast size or shape
- Change in the feel of the breast

## Most breast lumps are NOT cancerous

Other causes for breast changes include:

- **Fibroadenoma** – A mobile lump that arises from an overgrowth of fibrous and glandular tissue in the breast
- **Benign cyst** – A liquid filled lump
- **Lipoma** – A soft fatty lump
- **Fat necrosis** – A lump of dead fatty breast tissue caused from damage or injury to the breast
- **Mastitis** – Infection of the breast tissue which can include red, swollen and painful areas, breast lumps, pain when breastfeeding, nipple discharge or flu-like symptoms
- **Changes due to your menstrual cycle**

## What can I expect at my GP appointment?

Give your GP as much information as possible at the appointment.

Your GP will ask you a series of questions and may ask you to point out the lump but the whole breast area will need to be checked. You will be asked to remove your top and bra. You will be offered a chaperone who can be present during the examination.

Your GP will need to carry out an examination of your breasts and under your arms. This may be while you are sitting or lying down and your arms may be at your side or above your head.

## What next?

If you are under thirty with no other risk factors, and still having regular periods, the GP may ask you to return after your next period to see if the lump has changed.

In most cases the GP will refer you to the local Breast Clinic for a further examination and other tests to make a definite diagnosis. Your referral will be dealt with urgently under the 'two week wait' cancer pathway.

Even though at this stage a diagnosis of breast cancer has not been made, this cancer pathway ensures that if it is, you will be able to start treatment as quickly as possible.

## Preparing for your hospital appointment

You will receive a letter with information about your hospital appointment. This may include advice on the best ways to travel to the hospital too.

Consider **taking someone with you** and ask them to take notes for you if necessary.

Try to **clear your diary of commitments** for the whole day and plan for a relaxing evening when you get home.

Some hospitals offer a 'one stop' service where all the initial tests will be completed in one visit. This can even include a biopsy result. This means a shorter period of uncertainty, but also a lot of waiting around in hospital.

Bring cash for parking and refreshments and maybe a book to keep yourself busy.



## What can I expect at my hospital appointment?

You will be examined again, in a similar way as you were at your GP appointment. You will also be asked a series of questions in order to find out as much information as possible about the lump and your general health.

Your care team are there to make sure you understand everything, so do ask them any questions you have and let them know if you need any further clarification.

## What tests will be carried out?

**Ultrasound** – this is the same procedure as having a baby scan only on your chest, not tummy. Some gel will be put on the probe which is then gently pushed over your chest to see the tissue underneath.

**Mammogram** – this can be uncomfortable but shouldn't be painful. It involves placing your breasts in between the two plates and using low dose x-rays to look at the breast tissue. It is more helpful in older women, particularly after the menopause.

If a lump is detected in the above tests, **you may need a biopsy**. There are two types of biopsies, usually carried out under ultrasound guidance and using local anaesthetic, which can be done in the outpatient clinic:

**Fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC)** – a small needle with a syringe attached to it is used to extract a few cells from the lump.

**Core Biopsy** – a larger needle is used to extract breast tissue in a similar way to the FNAC. This device has an automatic trigger, which can make a startling noise.

You may be sore afterwards and the area may bruise. A small dressing will be applied, and you will be given advice about how to manage this afterwards.

The cells are then looked at under the microscope.

 Against Breast Cancer

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