

Breast tissue marker clip

Patient Information

CCDHB Radiology Service – Mammography Wellington Hospital

A tissue marker (or clip) is placed in your breast after a breast biopsy to help locate the site for future reference. This may be done at the time of your needle biopsy or at a later date.

You will have local anaesthetic to numb the breast before the needle containing the marker clip is inserted then taken out. Afterwards you will have a gentle mammogram just of that breast.

Why do I need a clip?

- During your breast biopsy procedure most of the lesion may have been removed and could potentially be difficult to locate again after the biopsy. To make sure the area can be found again, it is common for a radiologist to place a breast tissue marker at the biopsy site.
- Marking the site also helps to check that the correct area was biopsied.
- Sometimes when a woman is receiving chemotherapy to shrink a breast cancer before surgery, a clip is placed so the cancer can still be found at the operation.

Each clip is only 3mm in size. The markers are made of stainless steel or titanium that will show up on your mammogram. The presence of the marker on follow-up mammograms shows exactly where the area was biopsied.

This can prevent the need for future biopsies in that same area or can be used to find the area for subsequent surgery.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is the marker safe?

A. Yes, the marker has been tested and proven to be safe and effective.

Q. Will the marker set off metal detectors at the airport?

A. No, the marker is only 3mm in size and will not set off metal detectors.

Q. Will I feel the marker?

A. The marker is only 3mm in size and it is unlikely that you will feel the marker.

Q. Will the marker move around?

A. Sometimes the markers can move. For this reason we use a clip with a piece of gel that swells to keep the clip in place until the wound heals. After that, it is unlikely that the clip will move. The marker will not travel to other parts of the body.

Q. Will I be able to have an MRI procedure?

A. Yes, the marker can be safely scanned with MRI under appropriate conditions. Notify the physician performing the MRI that you have a breast tissue marker clip.

Q. How does the marker get removed from my breast?

A. The marker is designed to stay permanently in your breast. The marker will only be removed if your lesion is surgically removed