



Information about the Rutherford Breast Clinic North East

Rutherford
Cancer Centre North East

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Introduction

If you have been referred to our Breast Clinic by your GP, it is natural to feel anxious or worried.

Most people who are seen at a breast clinic will not have breast cancer. However, it is still important to attend your appointment so you can be fully assessed.

You can bring a partner, friend or relative with you for company and support. Some people may also prefer to go on their own.

What to expect at the breast clinic

Your appointment may take several hours so that all the necessary tests can be carried out. You will usually have a clinical breast examination, followed by one or more of the following tests:

- Breast ultrasound
- Breast mammogram
- Breast needle biopsy

continued

You will be seen initially by a Consultant Breast Surgeon in the presence of a Clinical Nurse Specialist to discuss your clinical history. This includes questions about:

- Any family history of breast problems
- Any medicines you are taking, including hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or the contraceptive pill
- Any previous breast surgery, including breast implants

Following which you may if necessary undergo breast imaging (for example, an ultrasound or mammogram) and tissue removal (a needle biopsy) by a Consultant Radiologist and/or Senior Mammographer. This combination of breast examination, clinical history and imaging within one visit is known as a triple assessment.

The use of these three tests means an accurate diagnosis can be made promptly. However, some patients will only need a clinical breast examination and imaging. A breast biopsy is only carried out if there is an abnormal area found through physical examination or imaging.

A triple assessment may be necessary to make a definite diagnosis.

Good to know:

Most people who are seen at a breast clinic will not have breast cancer. However, it is still important to attend your appointment so you can be fully assessed.

Rutherford
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Clinical Breast Examination

This is an examination of your breasts, your armpits, the area around your collarbone, and your neck. Your breasts are examined to find any abnormalities, including lumps or other signs or symptoms.

During the clinical breast examination, you will be asked to remove all your clothes above your waist. Your consultant or nurse will examine your breasts and armpits, pressing gently on the skin to feel any changes in texture.

During your clinical breast examination, the consultant or nurse may want to check both your breasts when you are sitting, and again when you are lying down. As part of the examination, it's normal to examine the lymph nodes (also called glands) under your arm (axilla) and around your neck.

If you have been referred from a breast screening clinic, you may not have a breast examination.

Breast Imaging

An image of the inside of your breast may be needed for further investigation, this is called imaging. Imaging is normally done by a specially trained breast radiologist or a radiographer. There are two imaging techniques commonly used, ultrasound and mammogram.

Ultrasound

An ultrasound scan is painless. It is generally done in a few minutes but can take longer.

High-frequency sound waves are used to scan and create an image of the breast. You will be asked to undress to the waist, and you will usually be asked to sit or lie on an examination couch for the scan.

To help obtain a clear image, some gel will be spread over the area of the breast first, and a handheld scanning probe is moved over the skin.

The person doing the scan will move the handheld scanning probe over the breast to look at the underlying breast tissue. The area under your arm (axilla) may also be scanned.

If you are under 40 years of age, a breast ultrasound may be recommended because your breast tissue may be too dense for a mammogram. Your consultant may also suggest that you have a breast ultrasound if they need to know whether a lump in your breast is solid or contains liquid.

Mammogram

A mammogram is a breast x-ray. You may have a mammogram as part of a national breast screening programme.

During your appointment, a mammographer (an expert in taking breast x-rays) will ask you to undress to the waist and stand in front of the mammogram machine.

X-rays are used to create an image of the breast. Mammography is usually done while you are standing up. Your breasts will be placed one at a time on the x-ray machine. The breast will be pressed down firmly on the surface by a clear plate.

You may find it uncomfortable, but the x-ray is taken very quickly, and the compression doesn't harm the breasts

Some people worry about the amount of radiation used in mammograms. However, they deliver a very low dose of radiation.

Mammograms are not often used in women under 40. Younger women's breast tissue can be dense which can make the x-ray image less clear so changes can be harder to identify. However, for some women under 40, mammograms may still be needed to complete the assessment.

Breast Biopsy

A biopsy is a procedure that involves removing a tissue sample from the breast for further testing. Sometimes a small sample of cells or tissue from the breast may be taken to help make a diagnosis. Cell or tissue samples from your breast are collected using a fine needle. This is called a breast needle biopsy.

The needle is passed through the skin of your breast (usually just once) into the lump or breast tissue being examined and cells are drawn out into a syringe.

An ultrasound or mammogram may be used as a guide to pinpoint the area before the sample is taken, particularly when it's very small or cannot be felt.

The procedure is quick, and a local anaesthetic isn't often needed. The pinprick left by the needle is covered with a plaster, and you'll be asked to keep this on for a day or so afterwards

The sample is then sent to the laboratory where it is examined under a microscope.

You will be able to go home when you feel ready.

When will I get my results?

At the Rutherford we can deliver triple assessment in our one-stop breast clinic.

Having investigations for a breast problem can be a worrying and stressful time. The staff in the breast clinic will know that you want results as soon as possible

Using the triple assessment, we can give a preliminary diagnosis within the clinic.

If a biopsy is necessary this will be discussed a part of a multi-disciplinary team which consists of a Breast Surgeon, Radiologist, Pathologist, Oncologist and Clinical Nurse specialist to review your biopsy results, images, and make decisions on any treatment that may be necessary .

A follow-up appointment with your consultant and specialist breast-care nurse may be arranged to discuss your result.

It may be a good idea to have someone with you when you go to your follow-up appointment to get your results. That way you can be sure there is someone there for support, should you need it.

For most people, a breast assessment will show normal breast changes or a benign breast condition. Benign breast conditions are common and there are many different types In this case the consultant will explain what it is and whether you need any treatment or follow-up.

If your results show that you have breast cancer, your consultant and breast care nurse will talk to you about your diagnosis and treatment options.

Useful contacts

Macmillan Cancer Support offer a wide range of information and support, as well as help with your practical, emotional, and financial needs. All telephone help lines are free and confidential, and interpreting services are also available.

Freephone: 0808 808 00 00 (7 days a week, 8.00am – 8.00pm)

www.macmillan.org.uk

Information sourced from:

www.breastcancernow.org/information-support/facing-breast-cancer/what-expect-breast-clinic-appointment

www.global.ihl.com/Alarm+Service/Health+fact+sheets/Breast+lump+investigation.aspx

www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk/services/breast-care/breast-cancer/investigations/

www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/diagnosis-of-breast-disease



Good to know:

It may be a good idea to have someone with you when you go to your follow-up appointment to get your results. That way you can be sure there is someone there for support, should you need it.



Can you make it?

If you have any queries or concerns regarding the breast clinic, are unable to attend your appointment, or wish to amend the appointment time, then please contact us by telephone as soon as possible.

Our phone lines are open 8am - 5pm Monday - Friday.

Location

Rutherford Cancer Centre North East
Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 7FD

The centre is easily reached from the A1 (north & south). Take the A19 exit towards A189/Cramlington/Blyth/Ashington, then take the B1331 towards Bedlington/Earth Balance, next merge onto the A1147 and continue past Earth Balance, the centre is located on the right-hand side.

A wide selection of hotels are located nearby. Ample free parking is available at the centre.



Your rights and responsibilities

At the Rutherford Cancer Centre North East, we work with you to ensure the best care package possible for you. To achieve this, it is important that you keep us informed of anything that may affect you or your care.

As a patient you have the right to:

Know the members of the team

All staff should identify and introduce themselves to you. You have the right to know the staff involved in your care and their roles and responsibilities. Their roles are outlined in the previous section but if you have any questions or uncertainties just ask.

Equal treatment and care, regardless of your religion, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity

We may ask you to provide personal details of these (e.g. ethnicity) to help with future audit and research. This will allow us to continually improve our treatment techniques, care and services provided.

Say “no”

Your consultant will discuss the breast clinic with you and confirm your consent prior to scanning/treatment.

However, it is your right to withdraw consent or say ‘no’ to any aspect of your treatment and care at any time even after signing this form. It is our policy to ask you to confirm your consent prior to any treatment planning or delivery of treatment each day, to ensure your safety and our best practice. You also have a right not to be involved in any research/sharing of information. This is clarified in our patient registration form where you will have the option to state your preference.

See your health/treatment record (medical notes)

You may wish to access your treatment records and this is your right under data protection legislation. This is known as a Right of Subject Access.

If you wish to view this information, a qualified member of staff will arrange this for you and talk you through the content. If you wish to have a copy of your records, then a written request must be given. The documentation will be organised for you and you will receive this within one month of application. There may be a fee incurred for this process.

Any other medical notes acquired externally (consultant letters, diagnostic scans, histology reports etc.) must be requested separately to us.

Privacy, dignity and respect

Our patients are always respected as individuals in their own right. We pride ourselves on having a team of dedicated healthcare professionals that put you and your care first. We will ensure that all the relevant policies, procedures and professional training are in place to support the safety, privacy, dignity, care and respect of our patients at all times.

Your privacy should be respected at all times and we encourage you to contact a member of staff if you do not feel this is the case.

If you would like further information on this, you can ask to see our Dignity and Respect policy.

Feel safe here and ask questions if you have concerns

As stated throughout this guide, we want to ensure that you are fully informed and have all the information that you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask questions at any point.

Confidentiality is of upmost importance to us and will be respected at all times.

continued

Your responsibilities

To help us to provide you with the best care possible and to ensure all your rights are met at all times, we ask that you have some responsibilities to us also:

Other medical conditions

We **MUST** be fully informed of any other medical conditions you may have or be under investigation for. It is important that we have full knowledge and understanding of any other medical conditions you may have when preparing for or attending the breast clinic.

If you are a patient attending the breast clinic you **MUST** inform your breast care team (including diagnostics) if there is any risk of you being pregnant.

Identification and keeping us up to date

When you visit the Rutherford Cancer Centre North East a member of the breast care team (including diagnostics) will ask you to tell them your name, date of birth and first line of your address. We may also ask permission to take an identification photograph for your treatment record. This is to comply with our safety standards.

It is also imperative that you inform a member of staff should any of your circumstances change so we can keep all of your information up to date.

Your information and how we use it

We record all information a patient provides us in our electronic system and sometimes in paper records. The information is part of your health record and will be retained in case we need to see you again.

Members of the breast care team (including diagnostics) who will be looking after you may share your personal health information with other healthcare professionals as part of your treatment care. All staff are bound by the law of confidentiality and strict confidentiality policies which are monitored by the information governance lead. Our privacy notice is available to you as part of the registration process.

Patient feedback

We are committed to providing the highest standards of care and we value feedback from all our service users, which includes patients, family members, carers and friends.

We recognise the value of listening to and involving our service users in the planning of our diagnostic services as the patient's perspective is ultimately the most important – it is your experience that helps to shape improvements.

We ask you to complete a questionnaire at the end of your appointment and really appreciate that you take the time to return this to guide us in future service planning. We encourage you to inform us at any stage if you have concerns or needs that are not being met. This gives us the opportunity to address these concerns in a timely manner. Concerns may be raised with any member of staff or directly with the Rutherford Cancer Centre North East centre manager.

Compliments

We love to receive any compliments about our staff during your scan visit and if these are in written form we make every effort to pass them onto the relevant staff.

Complaints

Our aim is to provide you with excellent care and you have the right to complain if we are not meeting our standards of care or if you have cause for concern. It is important you inform us of any issues or concerns as they arise, so we can make every effort to address these.

If you would like to make a formal complaint we ask that you put this in writing addressed to the Rutherford Cancer Centre North East Centre Manager. We will endeavour to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction as swiftly as possible and therefore will invite you to come and talk to us about your complaint.

We will fully investigate all complaints and provide you with a full written response within 20 working days.

Should you not be satisfied with the outcome of the complaint you can ask for a further review to be undertaken by writing to the General Manager who will undertake a full review of your complaint and the investigation. Rutherford Cancer Care Limited subscribe to the Independent Sector Complaints Adjudication Service (ISCAS). You can contact ISCAS if you are still not happy with the final resolution.

Our complaints procedure is available within our complaints brochure and is available upon request and in all our centres.

Payment options

Our services are accessible to self-paying patients and those covered by private medical insurance (subject to authorisation) in addition to referrals from the NHS (subject to approval). We work to ensure you receive the best possible care and ensure the referral process is as seamless as possible.

Privately Insured patients

We are proud that our diagnostic services are included in the networks of all national private medical insurers. Please make your clinician aware that you have private medical coverage at the time of referral so they can ensure pre-payment is not required.

Self-paying patients

For patients who are self-funding, a bespoke package will be created detailing the costs of the breast clinic which will be provided when you enquire about visiting our centre for diagnostic imaging.

However your scan/treatment is being funded, should you have any questions then please contact our dedicated customer care team who are here to help.

Regulating body

As a provider of healthcare services, we are regulated by Care Quality Commission (CQC):

Care Quality Commission

Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA

Tel: 0300 061 6161 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 5.30pm)

Audits and inspections are carried out by CQC to ensure our services and facilities meet the requirements as laid down in the healthcare regulations. The regulating body ensures that we operate in a safe and secure manner, ensuring that we have the right policies, procedures, skills and experience to provide our services. As part of our registration we provide a document called a 'Statement of Purpose', which describes our services, roles, values and processes for dealing with patient feedback, all of which is summarised in this guide. When we receive an inspection, a copy of the inspection report will be made available on the CQC website:

Rutherford Cancer Centres

Rutherford Cancer Care Limited

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CORP-IMAG-PI03-C2 V1