

Breast Seed Localisation “LOCalizer”

LOCalizer is a small seed/clip that is placed into the breast. This helps guide surgeons to find small breast lumps during surgery. This leaflet is designed to provide more information about “LOCalizer”



What is Breast localisation?

Breast localisation is a procedure used when the area of breast tissue that needs excision cannot be felt and the surgeon needs to be guided to that area. Currently, a fine guidewire is inserted into the breast guided by an ultrasound or a mammogram. The wire will then guide the surgeon when removing the tissue. This is usually done on the same day as your operation and you are advised not to move around too much as this could cause the guidewire to become displaced. Patients sometimes find the guidewire uncomfortable and this procedure can lead to increased anxiety on the day of surgery.

A newer alternative is the LOCalizer, which is a tiny radiofrequency seed (smaller than a grain of rice) that can be inserted into the breast tissue. This is done by the Radiology team (a doctor or other trained professional who specializes in x-ray) while you have an ultrasound scan or mammogram, and this can be detected during surgery with a special probe that the surgeon uses.

What are the benefits of using the LOCalizer?

LOCalizer allows accurate identification of the area to be excised. This can be placed in the breast several days before surgery which will improve theatre planning and reduce the stress of an additional procedure for the patient on the day of the operation. Unlike the wire, the seed is so small that that you will not even notice it in your breast and with the use of this technique, surgeons are able to find the area.

What does the procedure involve?

The seed is inserted by a radiologist or other qualified member of the breast team (a radiographer). This is very similar to the breast core needle biopsy you will have had. You will attend the breast unit and have an ultrasound scan or mammogram of your breast to locate the area to be excised. The radiologist or radiographer will then inject a local anaesthetic to numb the area and then they will use a fine needle to place the seed into the area that needs removing.

You may feel some pressure in your breast during the procedure, but this is not normally painful. If you do feel any pain, please make the staff aware so that more local anaesthetic can be given. You will not be able to feel the seed once it is inserted and you can continue with your normal activities. A small dressing will be placed over the puncture site and you will have a mammogram to confirm that the seed is in a good position. The procedure will usually take about 30 minutes.

There is also a small risk that when the seed is inserted, it doesn't lie in the target area. If this happens, additional localisation techniques, such as a wire, may be used when you come for your surgery.

What are the risks of LOCalizer localisation?

These are similar to the risks associated with standard wire localisation. You may have some mild discomfort and bruising. If you do have discomfort or pain then you can take simple pain relief, such as paracetamol

You may have a small amount of bleeding on your dressing. This is normal. If you have any heavy bleeding that soaks through your dressing apply firm pressure. If this continues and you are concerned you can contact your breast care nurse.

If you have any signs of infection such as a high temperature and/or redness, then contact your breast care nurse.

What happens after the LOCalizer localisation?

You can remove the dressing after 24 hours. You can return to work and most activities the following day. Avoid heavy lifting for 24 hours. You may shower the follow day but do not soak in a bath or go into a swimming pool for 48 hours. It is recommended that you wear a comfortable supportive bra for 24 hours.

What happens during surgery?

In theory, there is a small risk the surgeon may not be able to find the seed. To reduce this risk, your surgeon will check its position before your operation. If it cannot be found, a wire will be placed inside the tissue instead. The risk of this happening is very small, and it has not been reported so far.

During surgery, while you are asleep under general anaesthetic, the surgeon will use a highly sensitive detector to identify the seed and location of the breast tissue that needs removing. The surgeon will then proceed with your surgery. The seed will be removed during surgery.

Who do I contact if I have any concerns?

If you have any concerns Monday - Friday 9am-4pm you can contact your breast care nurse. You will have their contact number in your booklet, and you will also have their contact card.

If you have any problems out of hours or weekends, then you can telephone 111 (NHS non- emergency contact number).