

Mater Misericordiae Hospital
Regional Cancer Centre **Dublin North East**

Visiting the
**Symptomatic
Breast Clinic**

A Guide for Patients

Contents

Patient Information	2
Mammogram	6
Ultrasound	8
Core Biopsy or Fine Needle Aspiration	10
Results	11
If You Have a Query	12
If You Cannot Attend for Your Appointment	12
Travel2Care Scheme	13
Hospital/Clinic Details	14

This booklet was prepared by the National Cancer Control Programme in consultation with health care professionals and people who have attended a symptomatic breast service.

Patient Information

Your doctor has referred you to the Breast Clinic - the full name is the Symptomatic Breast Clinic. This may be because you have a breast lump, or because of another symptom such as discomfort or discharge, or a strong family history of breast disease.

This booklet tells you what to expect when you attend one of the eight Symptomatic Breast Clinics in Ireland, which have been put in place to provide you with the best possible care.

You will be examined by a doctor at the clinic. The doctor may decide to refer you for some tests. This may involve spending time in the Radiology or X-ray department. You might have a mammogram or breast ultrasound, or both. You may also require a test which will involve having a small needle put into the breast.

THE MAJORITY OF BREAST LUMPS ARE NOT CANCER.

The majority of patients who attend a breast clinic only require one visit.

How long will I be at the clinic?

We aim to see all patients promptly and carry out all your tests in one day. Sometimes, there may be unavoidable delays, particularly if you require a number of tests. It is possible that you may need to spend most of the day at the hospital and you should make allowances for this. It is important that you arrive for your appointment on time and not too early as this could result in a longer stay for you at the clinic.

What should I bring with me?

It is **important** to note that if you have had any previous mammograms or x-rays taken of your breast, please arrange to bring these with you. You will need to contact the hospital or clinic where you had these tests carried out and arrange to get copies of the files to bring with you. If you have difficulty in getting your x-ray film, please contact the secretary in the Breast Clinic in advance of your appointment.

It may be advisable to bring along something to read, as patients can sometimes spend a long time at the clinic if they are going for more than one test.

What should I wear?

Wear comfortable clothes with a separate top and bottom as you will need to take your top and your bra off for a physical examination and tests. Avoid wearing talcum powder, deodorant or perfume as they may interfere with some tests.

Can I bring a relative or friend to the clinic?

Yes. Everyone in the clinic is aware that coming to a breast clinic can be a worrying time. You are welcome to bring a relative or friend.

We would recommend that you don't bring children with you to the clinic, for your own comfort and that of your child. However, if this isn't possible, we suggest you bring a friend or relative to mind them while you are being seen.

There may be areas where accompanying persons are not permitted.

If you are returning to the clinic for results we would recommend you bring a relative or friend.

What happens when I arrive at the Breast Clinic?

When you check in you will be asked by the receptionist to confirm your personal and contact details. You will meet a doctor, who is a member of the breast team, who will ask you details about your symptoms and will carry out an examination.

After examination, the doctor may decide you need some tests, such as a **mammogram, ultrasound or biopsy**. If possible these tests will be done on the same day as your clinic appointment. A Breast Care Nurse is available at the clinic to provide information and support.

What tests might I have?

Depending on your age and symptoms you may have a mammogram or a breast ultrasound scan. Some people will have both tests performed.

After a mammogram or ultrasound the doctor may decide to take a sample from the lump, either by a core biopsy or fine needle aspiration. Explanations of these tests are provided later in this booklet.

What is triple assessment?

Triple assessment means you will have the following:-

- Be examined by a breast surgeon
- Have a mammogram and/or ultrasound
- Have a core biopsy or fine needle aspiration

It should be noted that not all patients who attend the Symptomatic Breast Clinic require triple assessment.

Mammogram

What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast. The X-ray is a picture of the inside of your body. It is produced by exposure to a controlled source of X-rays and the image is recorded on special photographic film or on a computer.

Are there any risks in having a mammogram?

A mammogram is a safe procedure. There are some risks involved with X-rays. All risks are relative, and the benefits of the examination have to be taken into account.

It is **essential** that you tell the Radiographer if

- You have breast implants
- You are pregnant
- You think you might be pregnant

Who will you see when you have a mammogram?

A radiographer will carry out this test.

Are you required to make any special preparations for a mammogram?

Wear comfortable clothes with a separate top and bottom. Avoid wearing talcum powder, deodorant or perfume.

What does the mammogram involve?

You will be asked to undress to the waist and put on a gown. Once you are in the X-ray room, each breast will, in turn, be positioned against part of an X-ray machine. Each breast needs to be compressed between the X-ray machine and a flat X-ray plate. A certain amount of pressure is felt briefly. This pressure is important to get good results.

A mammogram is not generally painful but it can be uncomfortable. Tenderness in the breasts can sometimes make the procedure more uncomfortable. Two X-ray views are taken of each breast from different angles.

The radiographer will go behind a screen, but at all times you are in view of the radiographer, and can be heard, should you have a problem. You need to keep still. You may hear a slight whirring from the X-ray machine. Each mammogram exposure takes only a few seconds. You will be in the x-ray room for approximately 20 minutes.

Ultrasound

What is a breast ultrasound?

An ultrasound scan uses sound waves to build up a picture of the inside of the breast.

Are there any risks in having a breast ultrasound?

No, there are no known risks and it is considered to be very safe. It is a commonly used way of getting a picture of the breast.

Who will you see when you have a breast ultrasound?

You will be cared for by a radiologist or a sonographer depending upon the type of scan you are having.

Are you required to make any special preparations before a breast ultrasound examination?

No.

What should I wear?

Wear comfortable clothes that have a separate top and bottom as you will need to take your top and bra off for the test to be carried out.

What does the ultrasound scan involve?

You will be asked to undress to the waist and lie down on a couch. The radiologist or sonographer will ask you about your breast symptoms. Once you are lying down your breasts will be examined to check the position of any lumps. A gel will be applied to your breasts and a small hand held sensor will be moved over the skin to view the breast from different angles. The lights in the room will be dimmed, so that the pictures on the monitor can be seen more clearly.

How long will the breast ultrasound take?

The scan takes approximately 5-10 minutes.

Will the breast ultrasound hurt?

No.

Core Biopsy or Fine Needle Aspiration

If you have a lump the doctor may do one of two tests to get a sample of the tissue/cells from the lump.

- i) A **core biopsy** is when a needle is inserted into your breast lump to get a sample of the lump. Local anaesthetic is used prior to the insertion of the needle to numb the area and reduce pain.
- ii) A **fine needle aspiration (FNA)** is when some fluid or cells are removed from a lump through a smaller needle.

Ultrasound or mammography equipment may be used to assist the doctor in obtaining the tissue/cells.

The cells or tissue are sent to the laboratory and examined under a microscope. The results are not available on the day of your clinic visit and you will be asked to return to the clinic at a later date.

Will the biopsy hurt?

The biopsy can be sore. However local anaesthetic is given and the procedure only takes a few minutes. Occasionally there may be a little bleeding or bruising.

Results

When are the results available?

You will usually get the results of your mammogram or ultrasound on the day of your visit. However the results of a core biopsy or fine needle aspiration are not available on your first visit and you will be given an appointment to attend for the results.

Staff will process your tests as quickly as possible. Everyone in the clinic is aware that this can be a worrying and stressful time.

If you are returning to the clinic for results we would recommend you bring a relative or friend.

If You Have A Query

If you have any queries regarding your visit or these tests please contact your breast care nurse team at your symptomatic breast clinic or your GP.

If You Cannot Attend For Your Appointment

Please contact the breast clinic secretary if you are unable to attend the clinic. Another person can then be offered your appointment. The secretary will offer you an alternative appointment if you wish.

Details of how to contact your breast clinic secretary can be found at the end of this booklet.

Travel2Care Scheme

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) understands that some women referred for investigation, treatment and care to Symptomatic Breast Clinic may need help towards meeting some of the travel costs associated with attending the service.

The NCCP funds a scheme entitled Travel2Care Scheme which is run by the Irish Cancer Society, the national cancer care charity.

The Travel2Care scheme is specifically aimed at women who have a genuine financial difficulty in meeting the costs of travelling to the Breast Clinic. It will refund the costs of public transport or an equal amount towards the cost of private transport.

To avail of assistance through this scheme, you must submit an application directly to the Irish Cancer Society. An application form is available from:-

Travel2Care

Irish Cancer Society, Dublin 4.

Tel: 01-2316619

Email: travel2care@irishcancer.ie



Hospital/Clinic Details

1 About the BreastHealth Unit in the Mater Misericordiae Hospital

The Symptomatic Breast Clinic or BreastHealth Unit was established in 2000. It is strategically positioned alongside the Eccles Unit of the National Breast Screening Programme – BreastCheck – and builds on the existing personnel, expertise and facilities of BreastCheck. The two programmes complement each other with BreastCheck providing a free mammographic screening service to asymptomatic women between 50-64 years while BreastHealth provides a comprehensive diagnostic and therapeutic service to women presenting with breast symptoms.

The BreastHealth service has approximately 9000 attendances per year and approximately 450 breast cancers are diagnosed each year between the BreastCheck and BreastHealth services.

The unit offers dedicated Family History Clinics for women with a strong family history of breast cancer. The unit recognises the importance of providing integrated medical care and works closely with local General Practitioners to establish guidelines for referral and advice on accessing the different services available in the facility. Quality assurance review is a fundamental aspect of the unit in assessing performance and maintaining high standards.

2 Location of the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital

The hospital is located in the northwest inner city between Eccles Street, Dorset Street, North Circular Road and Berkeley Road and may be reached by the public transport network serving the city centre and local streets. It is a 10-15 minute walk from O'Connell Street in the city centre.



See overleaf for transport information

3 Public Transport

Bus Links – Dublin Bus

Bus stop	No	Route
Eccles Street:	121	Drimnagh -Cabra
Dorset Street:	3	Sandymount or UCD – Whitehall
	11/11A	Clonskeagh - Glasnevin
	16/16A	Rathfarnham – Santry
	13	Ballymun - Merrion Sq.
	40 A/B/C/D	Finglas-City Centre
	122	Drimnagh. - Cabra
	41A/B/C	Swords-City Centre
	33	Balbriggan-City Centre
	746	Dun Laoghaire - airport
Berkeley Road:	10	U.C.D – Phoenix Park
	120	Cabra-City Centre
	38	Hawkins St. – Blanchardstown
North Circular Rd:	122	Drimnagh. - Cabra
	19	Dolphin's Barn – Glasnevin
	19A	Walkinstown- Glasnevin
Mountjoy Square	145	Mountjoy Sq.-Bray/Kilmacanogue

Provincial Buses

Bus Éireann	Busáras – 20 minute walk to Mater Hospital, all provincial buses can be accessed from Busáras. Provincial buses from Cavan, Navan Kells, Trim and Ashbourne also stop locally
Matthews Coaches	Serving Dundalk, Drogheda, Bettystown and Laytown. Stops locally

Train links

Drumcondra Station serving Cabra-Maynooth-Longford	10 min walk
Connolly Station	15-20 min walk
Heuston Station	40 min walk, luas service, bus no. 90 feeder to city centre & walk, or by taxi
Abbey Street LUAS stop serving Heuston Station & Connolly	10-15 min walk

Taxi Service

A taxi rank is located opposite the front steps of the Main Hospital Building, Eccles Street/Berkeley Road.

4 Car Parking


The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital (MMUH) has commenced work on the site to facilitate the redevelopment of the hospital. Throughout this time parking is limited due to reduced parking capacity. The hospital can be readily accessed by the public transport network serving the city centre and local streets. You are advised to use public transport or taxi where possible. For more information go to www.travelways.ie

A car park for visitors is situated on Eccles Street. The car park is open between 7.30 am and 9pm, Mon to Fri and 12pm and 6pm Sat and Sun. The charge is €2 per hour. **There is no queuing for the car park on Eccles Street allowed.**

Eccles Street is a disk parking area with maximum park time of 3 hours at €2.40 per hour. Parking disks may be purchased from dispensing machines on Eccles St. Alternative parking within walking distance of MMUH is available in Belvedere Collage and in Clery's car park on Marlborough Street.

There is a set-down collection point for patients located at the entrance to the hospital on Eccles Street. Please note that clamping is in place at certain entrances to the hospital. Please read the signs.

Disabled Parking spaces are available in the Eccles Street car park. There are a number of on-street disabled parking spaces



on Eccles Street. Low floor accessible bus routes serving the hospital include the 19/A, 10/A, 11/A/B, 3, 38/A, 746.

5 Hospital Facilities

Bank

A Bank of Ireland Branch and Pass Point ATM are located in the main concourse. Weekday opening times: 10.00 am – 12 noon and 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm.

Coffee Shop

This is located in the main concourse.

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 8.30 am – 6.30 pm
 Saturday & Sunday 12.00 noon – 6.30 pm

Interpreter Service

The hospital has engaged a private company to provide interpretation services. The Secretary will contact this company of your behalf, if required. Please ask your doctor to request this service when sending your referral to the breast clinic.

Newsagent

This is located in the main concourse and sells a variety of items including cards, magazines etc.

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 8.00 am – 8.00 pm
 Saturday & Sunday 12.00 noon – 8.00 pm

6 Location of the Symptomatic Breast Clinic

The Symptomatic Breast Clinics are held in 38 Eccles Street. It is a white building with a red door and is located on the same side of the street as the hospital entrance.

The clinics are held on the first floor of the unit. **Patients are registered according to their appointment time.** Please check your appointment letter or card for the time of your appointment.

Upon arrival please take a seat in the waiting area and wait for your name to be called.

7 Key Contacts

Queries regarding appointments

If you have a query in relation to your clinic appointment please contact our breast secretarial staff Monday - Friday, 8.30 am to 4.30 pm. You can leave a voice message outside of these hours and your call will be returned when the office re-opens. The contact numbers are:

Mr Stokes Secretary: **(01) 8034921/ 8034932**

Prof Gorey Secretary: **(01) 8034494**

Mr Kell Secretary: **(01) 8034870**

If you have query in relation to your mammogram or ultrasound appointment please contact our unit secretary Monday - Friday, 8.00 am to 4.00 pm. The contact numbers are:

Unit Secretary: **(01) 8032456/ 8032549**

A Breast Care Nurse Specialist is available at all Breast Clinics to provide practical and emotional support to patients attending the clinic. Ask at the clinic if you would like to speak directly with your Breast Care Nurse, or feel free to contact them on the following numbers:

Mr Stokes Breast Care Nurse: **(01) 8032739**
Prof Gorey Breast Care Nurse: **(01) 8034215**
Mr Kell Breast Care Nurse: **(01) 8545197**

8 Your Comments on your experience of our service

Patient Comment Cards and Comment Boxes are present in each waiting area in the unit. All cards are reviewed by the Unit Manager and discussed at regular unit meetings. Your feedback is very important to us and helps us to assess the quality of the service being provided.

If you would like to compliment the hospital on the services you received or if you would like to make us aware of any deficiencies you have noticed, please do not hesitate to contact our Patient Services department:

Patient Services Department

The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital
Eccles Street, Dublin 1.

Telephone: **(01) 8032206/ 8032468/ 8032825**

Fax: **(01) 8034777**

Email: **patientservices@mater.ie**

Alternatively, you can provide us with feedback on our website, **www.mater.ie**

your service
your say

National Cancer Control Programme

An Clár Náisiúnta Rialaithe Ailse
King's Inns House, 200 Parnell St. Dublin 1.

Tel: +353 1 828 7100 Fax: +353 1 828 7160

e-mail: info@cancercontrol.ie

www.cancercontrol.hse.ie

August 2009