Information on further tests

English

You have been given an appointment at a BreastScreen WA breast clinic where you will receive expert assessment and management by our team of specially trained health professionals.

It is not unusual to be called back for further tests. 90% of women recalled for further tests have normal results at the completion of their assessment and do not have breast cancer.

This information sheet describes what may happen in the clinic. You may have a further X-ray or breast ultrasound, or both. You may also have a needle test on your breast. Although these tests sound rather worrying, most women do not find the experience particularly unpleasant. Most breast cancers will be diagnosed by the tests recommended by our health professionals, but no test can guarantee the detection of all breast cancers. It is important for all women to follow-up on any recommendations made. The tests that may be performed include:

Clinical breast examination
A female breast physician (doctor) will perform a thorough physical examination of your breasts and ask you about your medical history.

Diagnostic mammogram
Further X-rays may be done to examine the area of interest in your breast.

Breast ultrasound
This is a test using sound waves (not radiation) to show more detail of the breast tissue. The breast is covered in gel and a probe is pressed against the skin.

Fine needle aspiration (FNA) biopsy
A thin needle is used to take a few cells from the breast and these cells are looked at under a microscope by a pathologist. If the area of interest cannot be felt, FNA can be done using ultrasound or a special breast X-ray machine to guide the needle. The results may be available on the same day.

Core biopsy
A slightly larger needle is used to take small samples (cores) of breast tissue to be examined under a microscope. A local anaesthetic will be used. The tissue will be examined by a pathologist. If the area of interest cannot be felt, the needle is guided to the correct area using ultrasound or a special breast X-ray machine. These results are generally available within 1-2 days.

Please note you may need to allow 6 to 8 hours for your full appointment.