

Radial scars and Complex Sclerosing Lesions

What are radial scars and complex sclerosing lesions?

Radial scars and complex sclerosing lesions are benign (not cancerous) conditions. They are the same thing but are identified by size, with radial scars usually being smaller than 1cm and complex sclerosing lesions being more than 1cm.

A radial scar or complex sclerosing lesion is not actually a scar. It is an area of hardened breast tissue. Most women will not notice any symptoms and these conditions are often only found incidentally on a mammogram or during investigation of an unrelated breast condition.

It may not be possible to clearly distinguish radial scars and complex sclerosing lesions from a breast cancer on a mammogram. Therefore your doctor may suggest you have a core biopsy, which removes small samples of breast tissue, to confirm the diagnosis.

A tiny tissue marker (a 'clip') is usually placed in the breast tissue at the time of biopsy to show exactly where the sample was taken from.

Follow up

Even though the diagnosis can usually be made on a core biopsy, your doctor may suggest a small operation (excision biopsy) to remove the radial scar or complex sclerosing lesion completely. Once this has been done and confirmed as a radial scar, or a complex sclerosing lesion, no further tests or treatments will be needed.

Experts disagree as to whether having a radial scar or complex sclerosing lesion might mean a slightly increased risk of developing breast cancer in the future. Some doctors believe that any increase in risk is determined by what else is found (if anything) in the tissue removed at surgery. Generally your doctor will wait for the pathology report of the surgical excision biopsy before telling you what follow up you will need. Most women go back to having yearly mammograms and ultrasounds after excision of a radial scar.

<https://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/information-support/have-i-got-breast-cancer/benign-breast-conditions/sclerosing-lesions-breast>