

Radiology

Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA) and Small Biopsy Information Leaflet

Introduction

You have been advised by your hospital consultant or doctor that you require a fine needle aspiration, usually called an FNA or a small biopsy.

This information tells you about having this type of procedure. It explains what is involved and what the possible risks are. It may not answer all your questions, so if you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the telephone number on your appointment letter. If you feel unhappy with any part of your care within the X-ray Department please ask to speak to the Superintendent Radiographer.

Please read this leaflet carefully to ensure you are successfully prepared for the examination.

What is a FNA / small biopsy?

A fine needle aspiration or small biopsy is a relatively simple procedure performed under ultrasound guidance. It is a method of removing a small amount of fluid or tissue by passing a needle through the skin. A local anaesthetic is usually given; this is a relatively non-invasive, less painful and quicker method when compared to other methods of tissue sampling such as surgical biopsy.



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What is Ultrasound?

An ultrasound scan is an examination that uses sound waves to take pictures of the part of the body being examined. It does not involve X-rays.

Referral and Consent

The doctor who referred you for this treatment should have discussed the reasons for this procedure with you in the clinic. You should make sure that you understand these before attending for the procedure. You have been sent to the Ultrasound Department for this procedure which will be performed by a radiologist (a doctor) He/She will confirm that you understand why the procedure is being done, its potential risks, and what the chances of success are. You will then be asked for your verbal agreement and consent for the procedure to be done.

If the radiologist feels that your condition has changed or that your symptoms do not indicate that the procedure is necessary then they will explain this to you and ask that you return to your referring clinician (e.g. your GP or consultant) for review. At all times the radiologist will be acting in your best interest.

Points to remember

- Please bring any sprays or inhalers that you are taking, with you to your appointment.
- Patients who are taking Warfarin or other blood thinning drugs (except aspirin) please contact your anti coagulation nurse specialist as soon as you get this letter – You may need a blood test to determine if you should alter or stop your treatment a few days before your appointment. Your anti-coagulation nurse specialist will advise you.
- If you are on aspirin or any other medication from your doctor please continue to take it as normal.
- We also ask you to leave any valuable possessions at home.
- You DO NOT need to stop eating or drinking before this procedure

Why do I need this procedure?

Fine needle aspiration or small biopsies are often performed when a lump is found, for example in the thyroid gland in the neck, or if an abnormality is detected close to the skin surface or on an imaging test such as X-ray or ultrasound.

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The fluid or tissue taken during the procedure is sent to a pathology laboratory for analysis.

Preparation

- You may need to change into a hospital gown depending on which part of your body is to be examined.
- You may prefer for someone to drive you home after the procedure.
- If you are diabetic please bring a small snack for after procedure to ensure your sugar levels are maintained.

During your examination

- The radiologist performing the procedure will be assisted by a Radiology Department assistant or nurse.
- The procedure will be explained to you by the radiologist. You will be able to ask any further questions before giving your consent.
- You will be asked to lie down on the examination table and the radiologist will use ultrasound to locate the precise area they need to aspirate, drain or biopsy.
- Your skin will be cleaned with antiseptic liquid and sterile towels will be placed over you.
- Local anaesthetic maybe injected into the skin; this causes minor stinging for a couple of seconds after which the area will be numb.
- The radiologist will then insert a fine needle through the skin to remove a small amount of fluid or tissue.
- A small dressing will be applied to the injection site
- This procedure normally takes 5 - 10 minutes.

Risks/benefits of Procedure

- There is a slight risk of localised bleeding or bruising. Every precaution is taken to avoid this, but if it occurs it quickly settles.
- A FNA or small biopsy can only sample a small number of cells from a mass or lump, this means that there is a possibility that any abnormal cells might be missed and not detected. This may mean that a repeat sample needs to be taken, but this is not because the initial procedure

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was done incorrectly. We will not know if a second sample is required until the pathology tests are available; your doctor will discuss this with you in clinic if it becomes necessary.

- A fine needle aspiration or small biopsy is a quick and effective test for determining the status of suspect tissue. Compared to a surgical biopsy this procedure involves virtually no possibility of scarring, infection or pain, and has a significantly shorter recovery time.
- Ultrasound has no known harmful effects.

After your examination

- You may get dressed and go home or back to clinic if you have an appointment.
- You may prefer not to drive yourself home.
- You may experience some tenderness or bruising over the needle insertion site.
- If you experience bleeding, swelling or **pain** that is not relieved with **Paracetamol**, contact your doctor immediately. It is **not** recommended that you use **aspirin** to relieve pain as it may worsen any bruising.
- If you have any problems after the examination please see your GP.

How do I get the results?

The results will not be given to you immediately. They will be sent to the doctor who referred you for this examination.

Other Sources of Information:

British Institute of Radiology X-rays and their safety

<http://www.bir.org.uk/patients-public/x-rays-and-their-safety/>

Please note that the views expressed in these websites do not necessarily reflect the views of UHCW NHS Trust or the NHS.

Patient Information

Do you need an interpreter?

If you need an interpreter, we will provide one of our hospital-based interpreters. You cannot use a friend or relative to interpret for you. We provide an interpreter as you are having a complex procedure and we want you to be supported by someone familiar with explaining your procedure. A friend or relative is still very welcome to come with you to the hospital.

It is important that you contact Radiology at least 48 hours before your procedure to let us know that you need an interpreter. Please call Radiology on the telephone number 024 7696 6933 and we will arrange an interpreter for you.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact the telephone number 024 7696 6933 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email: feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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