

Fine Needle Aspiration Biopsy (FNA) Clinic

Patient Information Sheet

What is FNA biopsy?

You have been referred for a Fine Needle Aspiration biopsy (FNA) by your health care provider. Fine-Needle aspiration is a way to check a mass or a lump when your doctor isn't sure what the cause is. A very small needle is put into the mass and gently moved back and forth while suction is applied. One or two drops of fluid are removed. The fluid is smeared on a slide and sent to a lab to be checked to see if the fluid has any cancer cells in it. Your doctor will get a report from our lab that tells him about the mass. Then your doctor can decide what the next step should be.

How long will the procedure take?

Each sample will only take about 10 seconds to obtain. The whole procedure from start to finish usually takes no more than 15 to 20 minutes. However, please allow at least an hour for your visit because of registration and possible waiting time in the office.

How accurate is fine-needle aspiration?

No medical test is 100 percent accurate. But depending on several factors, including the size and location of the lump, fine-needle aspiration is about 90 percent accurate in diagnosing cancer.

In the hands of a skilled FNA practitioner, this test is very reliable. In the instance of a clearly benign diagnosis, it may prevent you from undergoing surgery. In the case of a clearly malignant diagnosis, it quickly established the need for further treatment.

When and how will I get my results?

Generally, your results should be available from your surgeon or primary care provider's office in 2 to 3 working days.

What complications might arise?

Fine Needle Aspiration, has a very low risk of significant complications. The most common complication is a slight bruising or tenderness of the area for a few days following the procedure. Discomfort should be relieved by an over-the-counter pain reliever such as Tylenol or the application of an ice-pack for short periods following your return home.

If you experience swelling that doesn't go away, continued bleeding, a fever over 100 degrees, or if you experience pain that is not helped by Tylenol or other non-aspirin products, call your doctor's office immediately.

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