

Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA) Biopsy Head and Neck Surgical Oncology

In-Clinic Procedure Instructions

What is an FNA?

It has been recommended that you have a fine needle aspiration (FNA) biopsy because you or your doctor found a lump. This procedure is an important way to assess a lump. It is reliable, fast, safe, and has minimal discomfort. This information sheet will explain FNA. Please read carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, write them down in the space provided on the last page, so that we may answer them before your biopsy.

Why do I need a biopsy?

A lump may result from a number of conditions, including swelling from infection, buildup of extra normal tissue, and the growth of benign (non-cancerous) and malignant (cancerous) tumors. Most lumps are not malignant. The FNA biopsy is a simple procedure that can help determine what type of tissue is in a lump.

Are there alternatives?

A diagnosis can also be obtained by an open surgical biopsy. This method is very reliable, but can involve more discomfort, expense, and risks. Risks include bleeding, infection, nerve injury, and scarring. In contrast, FNA biopsy, in most cases, can accurately determine the nature of the lump with less discomfort, expense, and risks.

How is the biopsy done?

1. Prep the site with alcohol pads
2. Inject lidocaine with epinephrine around the lump to reduce pain during the procedure
 - a. Lidocaine is used to numb the area and epinephrine is to help reduce bleeding
 - b. During the procedure, you may feel discomfort, similar to what you feel when blood is drawn, or a feeling of pressure
3. Re-prep the area with alcohol
4. After your skin is cleaned, a thin needle is inserted into the lump
 - a. This will be done 3-4 times to ensure that the pathologist gets enough tissue to make a diagnosis
5. The tissue may be examined immediately under the microscope
 - a. The pathologist will determine when there is an adequate amount of cells
6. Once the procedure has been completed, the site will be dressed with a Band-Aid

Why is the Ultrasound used during the biopsy?

The ultrasound will likely be used during your FNA biopsy to improve the accuracy of the needle biopsy. Lesions or lumps that cannot be easily felt by hand will need the ultrasound to ensure the biopsy is performed accurately. Even when a mass is able to be palpated, ultrasound is frequently used to make sure the best area is sampled during the biopsy.

How long does it take to get the result of the FNA biopsy?

Pathology normally takes 3 business days to be resulted. In some cases, this may take longer if the pathologist feels that it needs a second opinion. If so, your pathology will be sent out to a second pathologist for review.

Post biopsy site care

A band-aid will be placed over the biopsy site for minor bleeding. This can be removed in 2-3 hours. You can use an ice pack on the biopsy site when you are home. Ice can be applied to the site for up to 15 minutes (3-4 times a day). You may have bruising at the biopsy site. If you have discomfort you may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Advil (ibuprofen) as needed.

What if there are complications from the FNA?

If the aspiration site is red, swollen, painful, shows pus drainage or a lump develops (i.e., signs of infection and/or blood accumulation) after the procedure, call your physician's office at Baptist MD Anderson.

Emergency Center

In case of any emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency center. *For non-emergencies during business hours, call our triage line at 904-202-7300 option 3.*

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