

FACT SHEET:

Biopsy and FNA

What is an FNA?

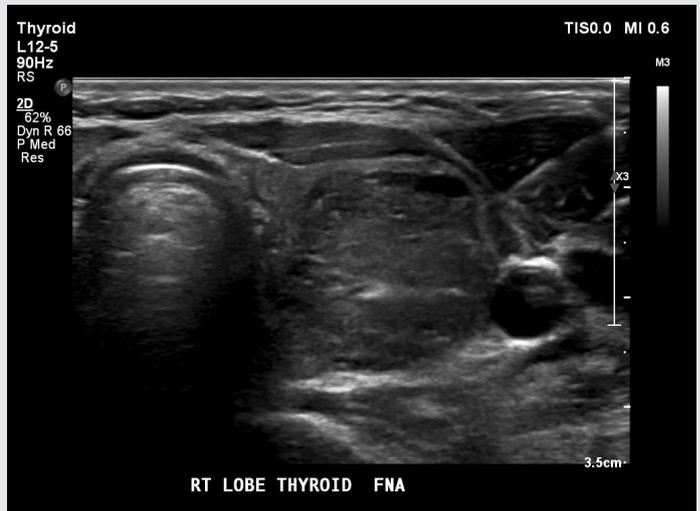
A fine needle aspiration (FNA) is used when more information is required about the significance of a lump or group of lumps within an area identified by a previous radiological examination. A fine needle is inserted into the area under Ultrasound guidance to remove small samples of tissue, which are then analysed. The tissue sample is sent to pathology for interpretation by a medical specialist known as a pathologist.

The advantage of an FNA is that it is slightly less invasive than a biopsy. A biopsy involves the use of a larger needle which removes a solid core of tissue (also called a core biopsy) and is therefore slightly more invasive. The main difference is that a core of solid tissue is removed, where a FNA removes cells.

Preparation for the procedure

We ask that you bring a responsible person to drive you home afterwards. If this is difficult we ask that you stay in the practice for 15-30 minutes post procedure. If you are currently taking blood thinning medications (eg. Aspirin, Warfarin, Plavix, Iscover etc.) these may need to be stopped. Please check with your referring doctor or High St Xray when booking the procedure.

Please bring any previous scans (x-rays, ultrasounds, CT, or MRI's) and reports as these will assist the Radiologist doing your procedure.



Ultrasound of thyroid

What are the risks and complications?

The risks of this procedure are rare, however they may include: Minimal bleeding or bruising can occur after the procedure. It is advised that you keep your dressing intact for at least 24 hours post procedure. Cold compression can also help. Infection is very rare as sterile equipment is used.

Insufficient cell / tissue collection. Occasionally the sample may not contain enough tissue or type of tissue for the pathologist to make a definitive diagnosis. If this occurs the procedure may need to be repeated in consultation with your referring Doctor.

During the procedure

The procedure is completed using Ultrasound guidance; however other modalities can be used. You will be lying down, and more than one sample is usually obtained. The duration of the FNA/biopsy depends upon the number of samples required and the area of the body that is undergoing the procedure.

The area is cleaned, local anaesthetic is then injected. Samples are taken and a dressing is applied.

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After the procedure

Leave dressing dry and intact for at least 24 hours post-procedure. If you experience any significant pain, redness or bleeding, please contact your GP. The samples will be sent to a Pathologist for analysis.

The results of the FNA/biopsy are dependent on the time it takes for the Pathologist to review and thoroughly test all the tissue under a microscope. The Pathology lab will send your referring doctor the results.

Follow up

These results should be discussed with your referring doctor at a follow-up appointment. The Radiologist conducting the FNA / biopsy will send your referring doctor a report about the procedure.

