

FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATION (FNA)

This procedure is performed by a pathologist, who is a physician specializing in examination and diagnosis of cells and tissue for the presence of various diseases. The procedure provides valuable information to aid in your treatment, and possibly to avoid a more complicated surgical procedure.

The procedure is done sterilely and involves inserting a thin needle (much smaller than the needle used to have blood taken from your arm) into a lump or mass in order to remove some of the cells in the mass for examination under the microscope. The procedure may be repeated on or several times, depending upon what the pathologist finds after the first FNA.

As with any procedure, not matter how simple, certain complications may arise. The most common “complication” is that this procedure may not answer all of your doctor’s questions, and an additional procedure or procedures may still be necessary. There is also the possibility of bleeding at the site (“a bruise”), although bleeding is usually very slight due to the small size of the needle. Very unlikely, but possible, is the development of an infection which could necessitate the use of antibiotics.

The result of the FNA will be sent to your doctor in the form of a report, generally within two working days from the time you have the procedure. You should make arrangements to talk about the results of the test with your doctor. If you have any questions before, during or after the procedure, please feel free to ask the pathologist.

