



ULTRASOUND-GUIDED FINE-NEEDLE ASPIRATION BIOPSY OF THE THYROID

During a fine-needle aspiration of the thyroid, your physician removes a small sample of thyroid gland tissue. The thyroid gland is located in front of the neck just above the neckline and is shaped like a butterfly, with two lobes on either side of the neck connected by a narrow band of tissue.

A needle biopsy, also called a needle aspiration, involves removing some cells with a hollow needle from an area within the body and examining them under a microscope to determine a diagnosis.

When a nodule in the thyroid is detected, we may perform imaging tests to help determine the size. Imaging studies cannot determine whether a lesion is benign or malignant. Your ENT specialist may determine that a biopsy is necessary.

How Should I Prepare?

Please notify your physician if you are taking any blood-thinning agents, such as aspirin, Lovenox, Plavix or Coumadin. Usually, no special preparations are required for this procedure.

We will cleanse the neck with antiseptic. We may or may not use anesthetic medication to numb the area. We will place an ultrasound transducer with a small amount of sterile water-soluble gel on your neck over the thyroid nodule. The physician will insert a needle through the skin under direct imaging guidance, advance it to the site of the thyroid nodule and aspirate samples of tissue. During the test, you will lie on your back with your head tipped backward and your neck extended. This position makes it easier for the physician to access the thyroid gland. You may feel some pressure on your neck from the ultrasound transducer and mild discomfort as the physician moves the needle to obtain the cells. We will ask you to remain still and not to cough, talk, swallow or make a sound during the procedure. After the sampling, the physician will remove the needle. Several specimens may be needed for a complete analysis.

Once the biopsy is complete, we will apply pressure to the area to decrease the risk of bleeding. We may place a bandage if necessary. No sutures are needed. This procedure is usually over in less than 30 minutes.

Post-Procedure Care

Generally, you can resume normal activities and remove any bandage within a few hours. The biopsy site may be sore and tender for one to two days. You may take nonprescription pain medication, such as acetaminophen, to relieve any discomfort.