

Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA)

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Aim of the patient information

This patient information aims to inform you what an image (e.g. ultrasound) guided fine needle aspiration (FNA) is and what to expect during and after the procedure. It explains what is involved and the possible risks. It is not meant to replace informed discussion between you and your doctor/other healthcare professional but it can act as a starting point for discussion. If you have any questions about the procedure please ask the doctor who has referred you for the test, or the department where the test will be performed.

IMPORTANT: This patient information may have been included in your appointment letter because there is a **POSSIBILITY** of performing an FNA if required. A scan will always be performed initially and then the decision made whether an FNA is necessary. This will be discussed with you.

What is an FNA?

This is a common procedure. A small needle is introduced through the skin and a small sample of cells are removed. The sample can be examined within the laboratory and used to assist the team that referred you in deciding on the appropriate way to manage you and any treatment you may need. As well as diagnosis, sometimes FNAs are performed to drain things, such as, reduce the size of a cyst, for symptom relief (e.g. pressure).

Prior to the procedure

There is no particular preparation for an FNA.

Unless we have told you otherwise, continue to take your regular medication as usual.

The procedure

When your procedure is due to start, a member of staff will show you to the area where the FNA will be performed. You will meet the practitioner who will perform the test and the healthcare team who will be assisting.

The practitioner performing the FNA will usually use an ultrasound machine to assess you prior to deciding if an FNA can be performed. This is usually achieved with you lying on an examination couch with the region of interest exposed.

The procedure will be explained to you; how it will be performed and the risks involved. You will then be asked for your verbal consent to give your permission for the FNA to go ahead. Depending on the location of the procedure you may be asked to sign a consent form.

The practitioner will clean the skin with a cold antiseptic fluid. The clinician will warn you prior to the sample being taken and may ask you to remain still.

Local anaesthetic is generally not used as it can be more uncomfortable than the procedure itself. The procedure itself is very quick; the whole appointment time is approximately 20 minutes.

Once the procedure is complete, a small dressing is applied. After which you will be free to leave the department.

Are there any risks?

An FNA is considered a very safe procedure, but as with all medical procedures there are some risks and some complications that may arise.

There is a small risk of bruising which develops into a haematoma (a larger collection of blood). As with all puncturing of the skin there is also a small risk of infection, but all necessary precautions are taken to prevent this. There is also a small risk of damage to some of the surrounding tissue or organs but this is minimal to the fact the needle can be tracked by imaging.

If there are any specific risks which are pertinent to your particular case, this will be discussed with you prior to proceeding with the test.

Unfortunately, some FNA samples fail to give an answer despite taking every possible care. If this happens it will be up to your referring doctor and you how best to proceed.

Results

The results will be sent to the team/doctor who referred you. You will be contacted by the referring department to be given the results or you may have already been asked to attend a further clinic appointment.

If you have any concerns after the FNA; for non-urgent issues please contact your GP or 111, for urgent issues please come to A&E.

Interventional Radiology

Pilgrim Hospital 01205 445486

Lincoln County Hospital 01522 573266

Grantham District Hospital (contact either number above)

Ultrasound Department

Lincoln County Hospital 01522 573069

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