



Gloucestershire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Image guided Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA)

Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about how an ultrasound guided Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA) is carried out and some of the risks involved.

What is a Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA)?

FNA is often used to find out why some people have lumps or swellings. FNA involves using a thin, hollow needle to remove samples of cells or fluid from a lump. This is not the same as a biopsy, which takes a very small piece of tissue away.

When you arrive in the Radiology Department, you may be asked to change into a hospital gown. You will then be taken into a procedure room. The radiologist will explain the procedure and answer any questions you may have. You may then be asked to sign a consent form confirming that you agree to have the test.

The lump or swelling will be found using an ultrasound scan. If after examination of the lump or swelling the radiologist feels that the procedure is not needed, they will give you an explanation.

Before the needle is inserted you may be given a local anaesthetic to numb the area. A very thin, hollow needle will then be inserted through the skin into the lump or organ. With the help of a syringe, cells will be sucked into the needle. The process will only take a few minutes. When the needle is removed your doctor or nurse may apply some pressure to help stop any bleeding.

The cells taken will be sent to the laboratory for testing.

How can I prepare for the procedure?

There are very few things you need to do before having this procedure.

If you are taking any blood thinning medication such as warfarin; you may be asked to stop taking this for 5 days before the procedure. Please ring the Radiology Department as soon as you receive your appointment letter for advice on this.

Unless you have been told otherwise, please continue to take your other medication as usual. You can eat and drink as normal before the procedure.

What are the risks involved?

Complications are uncommon but can include:

- Bleeding or bruising where the needle was inserted - this should settle in a few days
- Infection at the point where the needle was inserted
- Injury to other areas of your body close to the testing site - this is extremely rare
- Sometimes, the cells taken by the doctor may not be able to give the answer and the procedure may have to be repeated
- The lump may change size after the procedure if fluid is removed or if bleeding/bruising takes place

If you have any redness or bruising which you are concerned about, please contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice.

What happens next?

After the FNA you can go straight home. You can eat and drink as normal but we advise you to avoid physical activity for 24 hours following the procedure. You will be able to shower and bath as normal after the procedure.

How will I get the results of my FNA?

The results of your fine needle aspiration will usually be available 1 to 2 weeks after the procedure. Your referring doctor will see you in clinic to explain the results. You should contact your referring consultant's team if you have not had an appointment made already.

Contact information

If you have any questions, please contact the Radiology Department on the number shown on your appointment letter Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

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Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial.

Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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