

What is Fine-needle aspiration of the thyroid?

1. FNA uses a thin needle to remove small tissue samples from the thyroid nodule. The tissue is examined with a microscope.
2. FNA biopsy is done in the office with a local anesthetic (numbing medicine) using ultrasound guidance.
3. You do not need a driver to bring you to the clinic, and you do not need to be fasting before the procedure. Please alert your doctor if you are on a blood thinner.
4. You may feel mild discomfort or some pressure during the biopsy, but the level of discomfort is similar to a visit with the dentist or withdrawing blood from the arm for blood test.
5. The procedure usually takes between 5-10 mins. Longer time is needed for preparation and post procedural care.
6. You are allowed to eat and drink after the procedure. Some patients experience discomfort that gets better within 24-48 hours. This usually improves with Tylenol or Ibuprofen.
7. This test is accurate in identifying cancer in a suspicious thyroid nodule. In some cases, the biopsy does not contain enough tissue to make a diagnosis, and a repeat biopsy is necessary. In other cases (15 percent), the result of the biopsy is indeterminate. Indeterminate means that the findings are not clearly benign or malignant, the risk of malignancy is low, and further testing may be advised.
8. The results of the biopsy come back in 2-3 weeks. We let our patients know when the results are available. All patients are scheduled for follow up in 3-4 weeks to discuss the results in person and talk about the next step in management