

## **FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATION BIOPSY (FNA)**

**Satellite Patients:** Register at SCL Main Hospital, Central Registration, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

### **Why Do I Need A Biopsy?**

A lump may result from several different causes including infection, excessive normal tissue growth, a benign tumor, or a malignancy. Although the majority of the lumps are not malignant, your doctor's treatment of the lump will depend upon its exact nature.

### **What Is A Fine Needle Aspiration Biopsy?**

It is the simple, reliable, fast, and safe diagnostic method. It is not a surgical procedure.

### **Are There Any Alternatives?**

Yes, a surgical biopsy. It can involve discomfort and more risks.

### **How Is The Biopsy Performed?**

After cleansing the skin overlying the lump, a very small needle is passed through the skin into the mass. The needle is less than one millimeter in diameter and it is similar or smaller than the needles used in most laboratories to draw blood. During the procedure, you may briefly feel discomfort similar to that encountered when a technician draws blood from your arm. No local anesthesia is generally required. The biopsy takes only a few seconds to perform. One to three separate passes are taken during your visit.

### **Do I Have To Take Special Precautions After The Biopsy?**

No. After the biopsy, you will be able to drive, return to work, or perform any activity you normally do. Continue taking any medication since the biopsy does not affect the medication schedule.

### **What Are The Risks Associated With Fine Needle Aspiration Biopsy?**

This procedure does not pose any significant risk for you. Some patients experience a mild, dull, throbbing sensation in the area, which usually goes away in 30 to 60 minutes. If you experience any unusual discomfort or swelling, please call your doctor.

Minor bleeding, like a bruise, can occur without significant consequences. We try to prevent this by applying local pressure for a few minutes.

There are two extremely rare complications: infection and pneumothorax.

Pneumothorax may occur when the biopsy is done on the vicinity of the chest (breast, axilla, supraclavicular area). Because of an accidental puncture of the lung, pain and difficulty in breathing may ensue and a chest x-ray must be obtained. Besides being extremely rare, when it happens the severity is mild because of the needle size and usually no treatment is required.

Some patients have expressed concern that the passage of the needle through a tumor might cause the tumor to spread. With the small needles we use, scientific studies have shown that this is highly unlikely.

**What Can I Expect From This Biopsy?**

Most of the time, biopsy results can tell the doctor the exact nature of the lump so that correct treatment can be determined. Sometimes the biopsy can tell something about the lump, but will not give the doctor all the information that may be needed or it is not possible to obtain enough tissue. When this happens, your doctor may order a surgical biopsy.

Fine needle aspiration biopsy is part of the diagnostic work-up and must be interpreted in light of the clinical context (history, physical examination, laboratory and radiologic tests).

**How Long Does It Take To Get The Results?**

Results are usually available within 3-5 working days and will be reported to your physician.