

## **Procedure Information Sheet**

### **Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology by Pathologist**

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#### **Introduction**

Fine needle aspiration cytology is a quick, simple and safe procedure to obtain cells for cytological assessment. This technique allows easy confirmation or exclusion of certain disorders and thus facilitates further management.

#### **Procedure**

1. Fine needle aspiration can be performed as an outpatient or inpatient procedure.
2. The pathologist will insert a fine needle through cleaned skin into the palpable lump (e.g. thyroid, lymph node or breast). This is moved back-and-forth a number of times to sample the cells. The needle is then removed and the cell collected inside the needle are expressed and then spread onto a glass slide. The small needle puncture site in the skin is covered with a small dressing and the patient can then go home.
3. Repeated aspiration may be necessary depending on the amount of material aspirated.
4. The material on the slide is then stained and the cells are examined by a pathologist. A diagnosis is then made, and report is sent to the referring doctor for further action.
5. For small non-palpable lesion or deep seated lesion in internal organs, the procedure is performed under the guidance of ultrasound or other imaging system by radiologist. The slides are then sent to the pathologist for reporting. Please refer to the relevant procedure information sheet.

#### **Procedural preparation**

1. You will need to sign a consent form and your doctor will explain to you the procedure and possible complications.
2. There is no restriction concerning intake of food or fluid before or after the procedure.

#### **Possible risks and complications**

- Some pain and discomfort when aspiration is performed.
- Minor bleeding may occur and can be controlled by local pressure.
- More serious complications such as hematoma, infection, nerve damage or pneumothorax are uncommon. Tumor seeding along needle tract is exceedingly rare.

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**Remark**

The above mentioned procedural information is not exhaustive, other unforeseen complications may occur in special patient groups or different individuals. Please contact your physician for further enquiry.

**Reference**

Hospital Authority of Hong Kong.