

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Undergoing neck ultrasound and fine needle aspiration (FNA)

This leaflet aims to provide patients undergoing neck ultrasound and/or fine needle aspiration with additional information before their appointment.

Your doctor has asked us to perform an ultrasound of your neck. In some cases it will be necessary to take a small sample from any lump which is discovered when the ultrasound is performed. This is done using a technique called an FNA.

Neck ultrasound

The doctor in the ultrasound department will initially examine your neck using the ultrasound machine. The ultrasound itself may provide all the information needed.

Fine needle aspiration (FNA)

Depending on the findings of the ultrasound, a small sample from the abnormality may be taken using a needle under ultrasound guidance. This is generally performed to obtain more information about the nature of a lump. If this is necessary, the doctor in ultrasound will discuss this with you and will obtain your verbal consent to proceed.

If we are performing an aspiration of the thyroid gland, please try not to swallow when the sample is being taken. It is fine to swallow before or after.

The procedure itself

FNA is a quick and safe procedure for obtaining tissue to help make a diagnosis. The needle used is similar to that used to take blood samples. No local anaesthetic is required. Minor discomfort may be experienced but the procedure is not usually painful.

The doctor performing the procedure may take two to four samples to ensure enough material is obtained to make a diagnosis.

The procedure is performed under the guidance of the ultrasound machine to ensure samples are taken from the right area.

The whole procedure takes about 15 minutes. We usually ask you to wait in the department for about 15 minutes afterwards before you can go home.

Possible delays to your appointment

It is sometimes difficult to know how long each appointment will take and carrying out several procedures can result in a delay. We also run a one-stop clinic alongside our outpatient list. We therefore apologise if there is a delay in seeing you for your appointment.

Risks from the procedure

There is a small risk of bleeding/bruising or infection but no more than from a blood test. More severe bleeding is extremely uncommon.

Being on Warfarin, aspirin or other blood-thinning medicines is not considered an additional risk.

There is a small chance the sample obtained may not be sufficient to obtain a diagnosis. This is very uncommon - currently less than one in 20 cases. If this is the case, the test may need to be repeated.

There is also a chance the small sample may not provide a definite answer. This does not happen very often but, if this is the case, a biopsy may be required.

Follow up and discussion of results

A report for the ultrasound part of the study is normally available within a day or so, but analysis of the FNA sample is more complex and takes at least a few days to perform.

We will try to have the FNA result ready for your next clinic visit and the doctor will discuss arrangements for follow up before you go.

Occasionally we will want to get the result quickly. We may bring your clinic appointment forward and request that the FNA be processed urgently. The doctor doing the ultrasound will tell you what will happen next.

Some patients may not yet have a follow-up appointment.

This may be because their doctor is waiting for the FNA result to become available before allocating a clinic appointment.

If you have not heard from us after a few weeks, please call your consultant's secretary or keyworker/nurse specialist to check what is happening with your planned follow up.

The one-stop Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) clinic

Clinic 8 (ENT) and ultrasound run a joint list on a Thursday morning. This enables you to be seen by the ENT team and have your ultrasound performed all in one visit. Generally, doing both will take the whole morning but will save you a trip to have the ultrasound on a different date and will speed up the process.

Although we do encourage you to stay, you do have a choice. If you cannot stay for an ultrasound on the same morning, please let us know so a separate date can be arranged.

You should have a follow-up appointment to see the ENT team after your scan. If not, please return to the booking desk in the outpatient department to request one.

We also try to perform scans on the same day as the lung clinic on a Tuesday morning. These are often arranged at short notice, so please be aware that you may have to wait for your test.

We are in the process of setting up further one-stop clinics.

Important

Please leave any valuables at home. You are responsible for all personal items you bring into hospital and the Trust cannot accept responsibility for their loss or damage.

Contact us

If you need any help before your appointment date please contact the x-ray department on 01623 672202 between 9am and 5pm.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet (if relevant) please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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