

Fine Needle Aspiration

Information Booklet

Your doctor has requested a Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA) biopsy to be performed by a pathologist of Western Diagnostic Pathology. This brochure deals with the most common questions we are asked about Fine Needle Aspirations.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please ask the Pathologist or your own doctor.

What is Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA)?

Fine Needle Aspiration is a test which uses a fine (thin) needle passed through the skin to obtain some cells from a lump in the body. These cells are examined under the microscope by the Pathologist performing the test. In many cases this is an alternative to having an anaesthetic and having the lump cut out. It causes minimal discomfort and is a rapid method of finding out the nature of the lump.

Why do I need an FNA?

Your doctor feels that a cytological (cellular) examination will help to understand the nature of your lump, and whether anything further needs to be done. Often this test shows that a lump is harmless and can be left alone. Other lumps are best removed. The FNA results also help surgeons. Surgery can be better planned if it is known exactly what is wrong.

How is an FNA performed?

An FNA involves a consultation with a specialist Pathologist. After asking some questions, and examining the lump, the pathologist will clean the skin with alcohol. A very fine needle (smaller than that used for a blood test) will be inserted through the skin into the lump, and moved about to obtain a sample of cells. It is not necessary to use any local anaesthetic. Most patients compare the sensation to a blood test. Usually two or three needle "punctures" are necessary to obtain enough material. On completion, pressure is applied to minimise any bruising, and then the site is covered by a band-aid or a similar dressing to prevent any seepage of blood onto your clothing. The dressing may be removed the same day.

Are there any complications?

Yes, but significant problems are rare. There may be some local bruising, swelling and tenderness for a few days. Occasionally a tingling is noted during aspiration. This may mean a small nerve has been touched. Usually the sensation wears off quickly. Rarely patients having FNAs around the chest area have noticed shortness of breath or chest pain after aspiration. This may be due to air entering the chest (pneumothorax). If you think this may have happened please contact your own doctor or present at your local Emergency Department. A chest x-ray will probably be ordered. Most cases resolve without treatment, but a few require brief hospitalisation.

If the lump proves to be a cancer there is a minimal risk of spread along the needle track. This track area is included at the surgery to remove the tumour. There are rare tumours which it might not be appropriate to aspirate.

Many thousands of FNA examinations have been performed worldwide, and there have been very few significant complications

Are the results reliable?

The results of Fine Needle Aspiration are highly reliable but depend on a good sampling of the right part of the lump. Some lumps do not shed many cells. Sometimes the lump is difficult to find and sample with the needle. If a good sample is not obtained, further investigation may be needed some time after an FNA.

If at any time after an FNA examination you notice any change in a lump, or you are still concerned, you should see your doctor again.

How long will the FNA take?

FNA examinations are done by appointment and every effort is made to begin the procedure punctually. Fifteen minutes are allocated for each patient, and most aspirations are completed in this time.

When will I know the results?

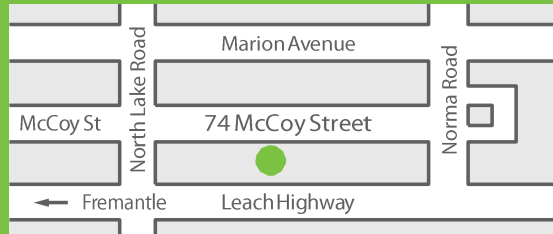
In most cases the result is available within 48 hours (Friday's aspirate are usually available Tuesday afternoon). The results are always sent to your doctor, who will then explain them to you, and arrange any follow-up or treatment you may need.

Why will I receive an account?

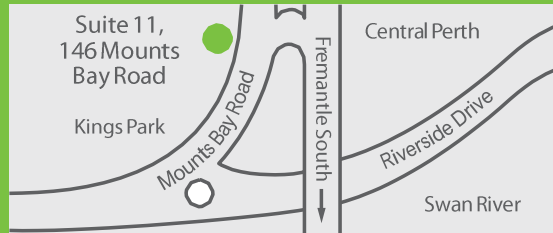
An FNA is a special procedure and the interpretation of this test always involves a specialist pathologist directly. A request for a FNA is a referral from your doctor to a specialist pathologist. You will receive an account for this test. Medicare will cover a proportion of this account and there will be an out-of-pocket expense to all patients (For details of the exact cost, see our Billing Guide for Out Patients, My Pathology Test - What will it cost?) In line with our normal billing policy, Health Care Cardholders, Pension Cardholders, Veterans with Gold Cards and residents of Nursing Homes will be exempt from this out-of-pocket charge.

Where do I need to go?

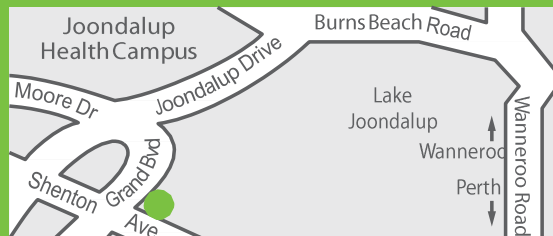
Myaree



Mount Medical Centre



Joondalup



Fine Needle Aspiration Information Booklet

Appointment Record

Day

Date

Time

Myaree

Mount Medical

Joondalup

All bookings, phone (08) 9317 0914

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