

EURACARE

PATIENT INFORMATION FORM **FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATION (FNA)**

What is a fine needle aspiration?

A fine needle aspiration is a way of taking a small sample of fluid or cells from the breast using a special needle. This allows the doctors to look at the sample under a microscope to find out what it is. This will allow an accurate diagnosis and treatment plan for you.

Why do you need a fine needle aspiration?

Other tests that you have already performed, would have shown that there is an area of abnormal fluid inside your breast. From the scan, it is not always possible to say exactly what the abnormality is due to, and the simplest way of finding out is by taking a sample of the fluid and to look at it under a microscope.

Are there any risks?

Occasionally, there may be some bleeding inside the breast and a bruise or swelling will form. Care is taken during the procedure to minimise the risk of infection. Care is also taken that the needle does not pass beyond the breast through the chest wall. This is especially important if a lump is situated at the back of a small breast.

Who has made the decision?

The consultant in charge of your care and the interventional radiologist performing the procedure have discussed your case and feel that this is the best option. However, you will also have the opportunity for your opinion to be considered and if, after discussion with your doctors, you no longer want the procedure, you can decide against it.

Are you required to make any special preparations?

You will probably have had some blood tests performed beforehand to check that you do not have an increased risk of bleeding. You may be asked not to eat for four hours before the procedure, although you may still drink clear fluids such as water.

Who will you see?

A specially trained doctor called an interventional radiologist. They have special expertise in reading the images and using imaging to guide the needle to the abnormal area.

Where will the procedure take place?

In the radiology department – in the ultrasound room.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be asked to remove all your clothes from the waist up and to lie on the examination couch and put on a hospital gown. You may be given a sedative to relieve anxiety. The radiologist will then clean the area of your breast that he or she is going to examine. The radiologist will then use an ultrasound probe on the most suitable point for inserting the needle. Your skin near the point of insertion will be numbed using local anaesthetic, and the needle inserted into the abnormal tissue. Once an adequate sample is obtained, a small plaster will be placed over the needle puncture site and you will be able to get dressed. The samples will be sent to the laboratory to be analysed.

Will it hurt?

When the local anaesthetic is injected, it will sting for a short while, but this soon wears off. Some discomfort may be felt when the biopsy sample is taken.

How long will it take?

Every patient is different, and it is not always easy to predict; however, expect to be in the radiology department for about 30 minutes.

What happens afterwards?

You can go back to normal activity straight away but you should avoid any strenuous exertion, such as heavy lifting, jogging, or aerobics for the rest of the day. If your work is physical we advise light duties only for the rest of the day, then back to normal duties the following day. If you take any antiplatelet medicines (for example, aspirin, clopidogrel) or any medicines that thin the blood (for example, warfarin) you may need to stop taking them for a short time after the procedure. The radiologist/radiographer will discuss this with you before you go home.

Finally

Some of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet but remember that this is only a starting point for discussion about your treatment with the doctors looking after you. Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure.

Giving my consent (permission)

The staff caring for you will ask your permission to perform the procedure. You will be asked to sign a consent form that says you have agreed to the procedure and that you understand the benefits, risks and alternatives. If there is anything you do not understand or you need more time to think about it, please tell the staff caring for you.