

St. Luke's Imaging Services Patient/Family Information

Ultrasound Thyroid Fine Needle Biopsy

What is an Ultrasound Thyroid Fine Needle Biopsy?

A fine needle biopsy is done to take a tissue sample of the thyroid gland. The biopsy allows your doctor to make a diagnosis and to determine treatment. This procedure can be done either as an inpatient or outpatient. It is done by identifying the abnormal area using ultrasound imaging. Once the abnormal area is identified, a fine needle is guided into that area and a tissue sample is taken.

Preparation

A blood test may be done before the procedure to determine the clotting capability of your blood.

If you think you may need medication to help you relax for the procedure, please discuss this with your ordering physician. You will also need to be seen by the radiologist in the Imaging Services Department and sign a procedure consent form on the day of the exam before taking the medication to help you relax.

Blood-thinning medications, including Aspirin, Coumadin and Ibuprofen, should not be taken before your procedure. Your physician should review your medication list and instruct you on the amount of time to discontinue taking the medications.

What happens during the test?

The procedure is done by a radiologist, a doctor who specializes in performing and interpreting radiology examinations. The radiologist will explain the procedure to you in the Radiology Department. You will be asked to sign a consent form giving your permission to perform the test. You will be positioned on your back on the x-ray table. The radiologist will locate the area using a special kind of x-ray. Once the area is located, he or she will mark your skin. The marked area will be cleansed and covered with a sterile drape. The radiologist will numb the area with Lidocaine, a numbing medicine similar to that used by a dentist. You may feel a needle stick followed by a burning or biting sensation, which lasts only a few seconds. Once the area is numb, the radiologist will guide a fine needle into the marked area. It is very important that you stay as still as possible during the exam and follow the breathing instructions given by the radiologist.

A pathologist will be present at the time of the biopsy to examine the tissue obtained by the radiologist. A pathologist is a doctor who specializes in diagnosing the abnormal changes in tissue. The pathologist will tell the radiologist when a sufficient tissue sample has been obtained. Sometimes it is necessary to make several passes with the biopsy needle to obtain an adequate tissue sample. The pathologist will examine the tissue samples and the results will be available in 2 to 3 days. The findings will be reported to your doctor, who will discuss them with you.

After the biopsy is over, a bandage will be applied to the biopsy site. Plan on "taking it easy" the rest of the day.

It is important that you understand your fine needle biopsy procedure. We encourage you to ask any questions of your doctor, nurse or the Radiology personnel.

Things to remember

- You may want someone to come with you to St. Luke's Hospital on the day of your procedure.
- You will be given discharge instructions before you leave the hospital.
- Please allow your physician the time needed to review these results.

Outpatient Instructions

Please register at the Outpatient Registration desk at the West Entrance. After registering, testing will be done in the Imaging Services Department on the second floor. Please use the elevators past registration on the left.

Name _____

Exam date/time _____