Fine Needle Aspiration Biopsy

What is a fine needle aspiration biopsy?
A fine needle aspiration biopsy is a procedure done to remove cells from a lump or mass. A doctor will do this procedure. A thin (fine) needle is put into a lump or mass and cells are taken out to be examined by a pathologist. A pathologist is a doctor who will look at the cells under a microscope. This sample of cells is called a “biopsy.” Sometimes this biopsy is called by its initials “FNA”.

How is the biopsy done?
- Your skin will be cleaned with an antibacterial solution. The doctor will talk with you if a numbing medicine is needed for the procedure.
- A small thin needle attached to a syringe will be put into the lump or mass (one or more times) to collect cells.
- The cells are sent to the laboratory to be examined by a pathologist.

What happens after the biopsy?
- The biopsy site will be covered with a small bandage.
- You may be tender and have some bruising around the biopsy site. This should go away a day or two after the biopsy.
- You may use an ice pack over the biopsy site to help ease discomfort. Place a cloth between your skin and the ice pack. Put the ice pack on the area for 15 to 20 minutes at a time.
- Talk to your doctor about what medicine you can take to help with pain relief.
- Final results are usually available 3 to 5 working days after the biopsy. Instructions will be given to you on how to obtain this information.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.
When should I call the doctor?

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- Chills or fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Swelling that does not go away
- Pain that is not relieved by pain medicine
- Continued bleeding from the biopsy site