Ultrasound Guided Needle Biopsy

What is an ultrasound-guided needle biopsy?

An ultrasound-guided needle biopsy is a medical test used to learn more about a lesion or mass. The biopsy is done by using an ultrasound to find the lesion or mass. This is one type of "image-guided" biopsy, which combines the use of ultrasound with either a Fine Needle Aspiration or Core Needle Biopsy.

This test is most often used for lymph node, breast, and liver biopsies. This test can also be used with endoscopy or bronchoscopy when tumors are within the GI tract or the lungs. These are known as endoscopic ultrasound (EUS) or endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS).

How do I prepare for an ultrasound-guided needle biopsy?

Often there is no need to prepare for this test. However, if you are on blood thinners, you may need to stop them several days before the test. Other preparation may be needed if you are having a EUS or EBUS. Your provider will talk to you about this when your test is scheduled.

How is this test performed?

Local anesthesia, such as lidocaine, will be used to numb the area. An ultrasound is done to find the abnormality and is used to guide the needle into the lesion. The needle removes tissue for testing. The actual insertion and removal of the needle takes only a few minutes. The whole procedure will take about 30 minutes.

What to expect after the test?

As the numbing medication wears off, you may have some discomfort. You may have a small amount of bleeding at the site. In some cases, a pocket of blood, or a hematoma, will collect in the area of the biopsy. This can be uncomfortable, but should resolve over the next few days. If there is severe pain following the procedure, you should contact your provider right away.

How do you receive the results of your ultrasound guided needle biopsy?

The tissue sample is reviewed by a pathologist and a report is written. The pathology report provides information about the patient and the reason for the test. The report will likely detail both normal and abnormal findings. Your provider will be able to discuss your results with you. You may want to ask for a copy for your records.