



**Imaging**



**Brighton and Sussex  
University Hospitals**  
NHS Trust

# Ultrasound guided (U/S) percutaneous aspiration

Information for patients

## What is a U/S guided percutaneous aspiration?

A needle aspiration is a way of taking a sample of cells out of your body, using only a fine needle, so that it can be examined under a microscope by a pathologist, an expert in making diagnoses from tissue samples. Because this aspiration is done through the skin, it is called a percutaneous aspiration. The doctor doing the procedure will use ultrasound imaging to guide him/her to get the sample.

## Why do I need a percutaneous U/S aspiration?

Other tests that you probably have had performed, such as an ultrasound scan or a CT scan, will have shown that there is an area of abnormal tissue inside your body. 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 cells away for a pathologist to examine.

## Who has made the decision?

The consultant in charge of your case, and the radiologist (the doctor who specialises in Imaging Procedures) who will be carrying out the U/S Aspiration will have discussed the situation, and feel that this is the best option. However, you will also have the opportunity for your opinion to be taken into account and if, after discussion with your doctors, you do not want the procedure carried out, then you can decide against it.

## Who will be doing the percutaneous U/S aspiration?

A specialist doctor called a Radiologist. Radiologists have special expertise in performing image guided procedures.

## Where will the U/S aspiration take place?

In the Imaging Department, in an Ultrasound Room. You will be checked into the department by a nurse or Healthcare Assistant, who will ask some medical questions and fill out some paperwork. The radiologist will then come and talk to you about the procedure. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions or raise any concerns, and only if you are happy to continue with the procedure will you be asked to sign the consent form.

## What actually happens during a U/S percutaneous aspiration?

You will lie on the ultrasound table, in the position that the radiologist has decided is most suitable.

The radiologist will keep everything as sterile as possible. Your skin will be cleaned with antiseptic, and you may have some of your body covered with a sterile drape. The radiologist will use the ultrasound machine to decide on the most suitable point for inserting the fine needle. Your skin may be anaesthetised (numbed) with local anaesthetic, and the fine needle inserted into the abnormal tissue.

While the first part of the procedure may seem to take a while, actually doing the aspiration does not take very long at all, and the needle may be in and out so quickly that you barely notice it.

## How do I prepare for U/S percutaneous aspiration?

To prepare for the procedure you will need to make sure you do the following:

You may need to have a blood test before your procedure. Please let us know if you are taking any **antiplatelet medicines** (for example, Aspirin, Clopidogrel) or any **medicines that thin the blood** (for example, Warfarin), as these may need to be stopped temporarily before the procedure. Call the IR department for advice as soon as you get your appointment letter on **01273 696955 Ext. 4240/4278** and ask to speak to one of the IR nursing team.

You cannot eat or drink anything (except water) for four hours before your procedure.

You can drink water up to two hours before your procedure.

You will need a responsible adult to take you home.

## Will it hurt?

You may or may not require local anaesthetic for this procedure, depending on where in your body the doctor is doing the aspiration. If local anaesthetic is injected it will sting for a moment but the stinging will wear off leaving that area of skin numb. The procedure shouldn't be painful, but if you feel pain tell the radiologist looking after you.

## How long will it take?

Whilst every patient and every patient's situation is different we allow 30 minutes for this procedure.

## What happens afterwards?

You may be required to recover in our recovery area on a trolley and will stay in the department for up to 2 hours after the procedure. Please arrange for someone to pick you up and take you home.

## What are the risks?

Percutaneous aspiration is a very safe procedure, but there are a few risks or complications that can arise, as with any medical treatment.

Not all aspirations are successful, for example normal tissue is obtained not abnormal, so it may need repeated.

## What are the benefits?

It is a minimally invasive and quick procedure that is very safe.

## Afterwards

Typically, patients will be in the department for a short period of time.

You will need to have a responsible adult to take you home.

Continue with your normal medication as prescribed, unless otherwise advised.

If you are having some mild pain you can take over-the-counter painkillers (follow the instructions on the packet).

Don't drive for 24 hours after the procedure.

The results will take 7-10 working days to process.

**If you feel you need urgent medical attention or are worried about anything** please contact the IR department Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm, your GP, or go to your nearest A&E department.

## **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 team looking after you.

**Make sure you are satisfied that you have received enough information about the procedure before you sign the consent form.**

**Interventional Radiology:**

**01273 696955 Ext. 4240/4278**

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The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

Ref number: 860

Publication Date: February 2018

Review Date: February 2020

