

Some people experience discomfort following the procedure. In this case, simple pain killers (such as paracetamol) should settle symptoms.

### What happens afterwards?

After the biopsy you can go straight home. You can drive, eat and drink as normal. It is advisable to avoid strenuous activity for 24 hours, however most people are able to go back to work the same day as, or the day after the procedure.

### When will I get my results?

The ultrasound results will usually be available on the computerized results system within 24 hours of the procedure. If you were referred by your GP, we advise you to make an appointment to see your GP to discuss the results a week after your procedure. If you were referred by a hospital doctor, they will make arrangements to give you the results, usually either over the telephone or by seeing you in clinic.

The results of an FNA or core biopsy take longer than the results of the ultrasound to process. However they will usually be available to the doctor who referred you for the scan within two weeks of the procedure.

### Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the X-ray department on 01872 252290.

### Further Information

For general information about radiology departments visit 'The Royal College of Radiologists' website: [www.goingfora.com](http://www.goingfora.com)



## Neck ultrasound

With or without neck biopsy



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## What is neck ultrasound?

Your doctor has requested that you have an examination called a neck ultrasound. This is a quick, safe, painless, effective way of looking at the tissues of your neck using sound waves to create a picture of your neck. The examination involves placing a probe on the skin surface along with some jelly to aid contact with the skin. It usually takes less than 20 minutes.

## How do I prepare for it?

Please avoid wearing:

- perfumes, moisturisers and creams on your neck
  - these can damage the probe
- high collared / roll neck garments and necklaces
  - these restrict access to your neck.

## What is a neck biopsy and why might I need it?

In many cases neck ultrasound gives a diagnosis without any need for further tests. In a small number of patients however (around 1 in 5 patients attending for a neck ultrasound in this hospital), the doctor performing the ultrasound may feel that a neck biopsy would help to clarify what they have seen on the scan. Usually the doctor will offer you a biopsy at the same time as the ultrasound scan so that you don't have to come back another day. If the doctor does feel a biopsy is needed, you can of course choose not to have it done, or to choose to think about it and come back at a later date.

During a neck biopsy, the ultrasound machine is used to guide a small needle into your neck. This is used to collect small pieces of tissue, which are then sent for examination under a microscope in a laboratory.

## Are there different types of biopsy?

There are two types of biopsy, one called 'Fine Needle Aspiration (FNA)', the other called 'Core Biopsy.' The doctor performing your scan will advise you which one they think is necessary.

During an FNA, a very thin needle (thinner than the ones used to take blood) is used to collect cells. There is no need for local anaesthetic and the procedure is usually only slightly uncomfortable.

A core biopsy uses a slightly thicker needle than the one used for an FNA so that a slightly larger tissue sample can be taken for examination. In this case local anaesthetic is used to numb the area.

## What does a neck biopsy involve?

You will be asked to lie on a couch. The doctor will spread some jelly on your skin, and use the probe to look at the structures in your neck.

If your doctor feels that a biopsy is advisable, and you wish to proceed, the doctor will clean your skin. If a core biopsy is necessary, they will inject some local anaesthetic into your neck. They then use the ultrasound probe to guide the needle into the area of abnormality.

Usually one or two samples are taken, depending on the sample quality. The procedure usually takes less than 30 minutes.

Remember, most patients who are referred for neck ultrasound will not need a neck biopsy.

## What are the benefits of a neck biopsy?

If the doctor performing the ultrasound identifies an area of abnormality within your neck but is unsure as to its nature, a biopsy can help to give a diagnosis. This in turn can help to determine if you need any further treatment, and if so, what that treatment should be.

## Are there any alternatives?

In some circumstances it may be possible to perform a small operation in theatre and take a biopsy. You can choose not to have a biopsy taken, but this can cause delays to diagnosis and any treatment that may be required.

## What are the risks of a neck biopsy?

There are no known risks from a neck ultrasound itself.

Both types of neck biopsy are very safe, and almost never result in complications. You may develop a bruise, or more rarely a haematoma (a collection of blood under your skin). There is a very small risk of damaging the lung if the area of abnormality is very low in your neck. There is a possible risk of infection whenever a needle is introduced into the body, which is why the doctor will clean your skin before doing a biopsy.