

Specimen Type:

Fine Needle Aspiration

(FNA, needle biopsy)

Patient Preparation:

As ordered by M.D.

Specimen Collection:

After the needle is withdrawn its contents may be rinsed into a container of cytology fixative or a physiologic solution such as normal saline by repeatedly drawing up and expelling the solution into an appropriate size container.

It may be advantageous to prepare direct smears. It is imperative that the material be fixed immediately after smearing. Speed in preparing and fixing the smear is critical. Air drying, which starts to occur within 5 seconds of spreading the smear may make the smear difficult or impossible to read.

Expel 1 to 2 drops of the needle content onto a clean glass slide. Oppose a second glass slide onto the first, allowing the aspirated material to provide surface tension between the two slides. Then quickly and gently pull the two slides apart in a horizontal motion to distribute the material in a thin film over both slides. These slides must then be promptly fixed with spray fixative or immersed in 95% ETOH.

Some slides may be submitted air-dried for Wright's staining. This technique is particularly useful when suspected diagnoses include various infectious processes or lymphoproliferative disorders, including lymphoma or leukemia.

Specimen Requirements:

Adequate cellular material for cytologic evaluation obtained from an appropriately performed fine needle aspiration. Dependent upon specimen site and character of the lesion being aspirated.

Handling/Transport:

If submitted fresh, submit to laboratory immediately, refrigerate if delayed. If direct smears are spray fixed, allow the fixative to dry before placing slides in plastic slide container.
