

# Thyroid Biopsy



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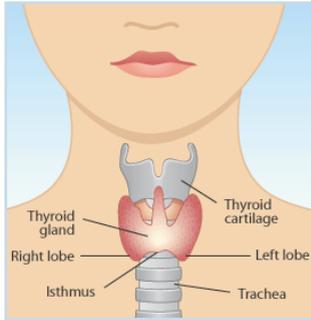
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## What is the thyroid?

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped endocrine gland that is normally located in the lower front of the neck. The thyroid's job is to produce hormones that are secreted into the blood and carried to every tissue in the body.



Thyroid hormones help the body use energy, stay warm and keep the brain, heart, muscles, and other organs working properly.

## Thyroid biopsy

A thyroid biopsy is a procedure in which a small sample of tissue is removed from the thyroid gland and examined under a microscope.

## Why do you need a thyroid biopsy?

A thyroid biopsy is done to:

- Determine the cause of a lump or nodule found in the thyroid gland. Lumps in the thyroid gland may be discovered during a physical examination or seen on a thyroid ultrasound.

## How to prepare for your biopsy

Before you have a thyroid biopsy, be sure to tell your doctor if you:

- Have any allergies to medications
- Take any medications regularly. Be sure your doctor knows the names and doses of all of your medications.
- Take aspirin or medications that contain aspirin

- Have ever been told that you have a bleeding problem
- Are or might be pregnant
- Please refrain from taking Coumadin® 3 days prior to your biopsy or plavix 5 days prior with your doctor's permission

## How the biopsy is done

During the test, you will lie on your back with a pillow under your shoulders, your head tipped backward, and your neck extended. This position pushes the thyroid gland forward, making it easier to perform the biopsy. It is important to remain very still during the procedure. Try not to cough or swallow when the needle is in place.

- Before a needle biopsy, your radiologist will clean the skin over your thyroid gland with antiseptic solution
- Using ultrasound guidance, your radiologist then inserts a thin needle into your thyroid gland and removes a small amount of thyroid cells into the needle. This will be repeated several times. A needle biopsy takes about 5 to 10 minutes.
- Cells from your thyroid gland are sent to a laboratory for examination.
- After a needle biopsy, the biopsy site is covered with a clean bandage.
- Your doctor will communicate the results with you in a few days.

## Risks

Infection can occur whenever the skin is punctured. After a thyroid biopsy, it is important to keep the biopsy site clean and dry.

The most common complication of a thyroid biopsy is minor bleeding into the thyroid gland, which may cause slight discomfort and bruising. Bleeding and discomfort at the biopsy site can be reduced by using cold compresses.

People who take aspirin regularly, who have bleeding disorders, or who take blood-thinning medication (such as Coumadin) are at greater risk for bleeding longer than expected from a biopsy site. If this is a concern, your doctor will give you specific instructions.

## After the test

Call your doctor immediately if you experience:

- Excessive bleeding through the bandage
- Difficulty swallowing
- Any signs of infection, such as increased pain, swelling, redness or warmth around the biopsy site
- Red streaks extending from the biopsy site
- Drainage of pus from the biopsy site
- Swollen lymph nodes in the neck
- Fever or chills



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