

# Thyroid Biopsy



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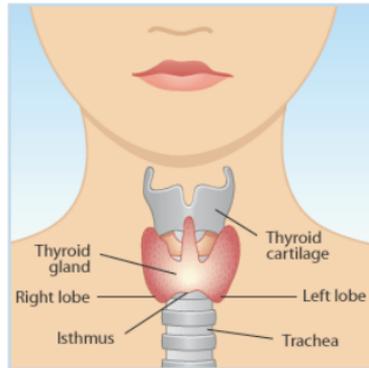
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## What is the thyroid?

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 performed 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 thyroid fine needle aspiration biopsy

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

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

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- Have ever been told that you have a bleeding problem.
  - Are or might be pregnant.
  - Take aspirin or other blood thinners.
  - There is no need to stop taking Coumadin<sup>®</sup>, Plavix or other blood thinners prior to the thyroid biopsy.

## **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 RIMI doctor will clean the skin over your thyroid gland with antiseptic solution.
- Using ultrasound guidance, your doctor then inserts a thin needle into your thyroid gland and removes a small amount of thyroid cells. 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 a procedure is performed. RIMI doctors use sterile techniques during a thyroid biopsy to prevent infection. 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 a cold compress.

People who take aspirin regularly, who have bleeding disorders or who take blood-thinning medication (such as Coumadin®) are at higher risk for bleeding longer than expected from a biopsy site. It is not necessary to stop blood thinners prior to thyroid biopsy. The doctor will use fine needles and apply gentle pressure to minimize the risk of bleeding. 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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