



Your physician has requested for you to obtain a Fine Needle Aspiration through Stanford HealthCare or the VA Palo Alto Healthcare System. The location of your biopsy is:

Head & Neck Oncology Clinic
Stanford Blake Wilbur Building, 3rd Floor
900 Blake Wilbur Drive, 3rd Floor,
Palo Alto, CA 94304

VA Palo Alto Healthcare System
3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304

The office hours for the Head and Neck Oncology Clinic are from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday thru Friday. The clinic operates as a walk-in service (i.e. first come first serve) with no appointments necessary. Early arrival is encouraged to minimize waiting, as wait times vary widely and may be in excess of 3 hours or more. The VA Palo Alto operates from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Fine Needle Aspiration — Your Questions Answered

What is a fine needle aspiration (FNA)?

A fine needle aspiration (FNA) biopsy is a safer, faster, and less painful alternative to having surgery to remove a piece of tissue. It is a simple way of sampling your lump or mass by using a needle that is thinner than those typically used to draw blood for lab tests. The needle is inserted through the skin and into the lump to obtain a few drops of tissue, which is then smeared onto a glass slide and evaluated under a microscope. All sorts of conditions, including cancer, benign tumors, and infections can be diagnosed with this procedure. FNA is frequently used to evaluate neck lumps, thyroid nodules, and enlarged lymph nodes. Since it is simple to perform, it is useful for initial evaluation of a lump. In some cases, surgery may be needed after FNA to take out a larger piece of tissue for further evaluation.

Who performs the fine needle aspiration?

Your fine needle aspiration (FNA) will be performed by a physician who specializes in cytopathology (cytopathologist) which is the field of medicine that focuses on diagnosing disease based on how tissue smeared onto a slide looks under the microscope. The cytopathologist may be assisted by pathology residents or fellows who have been trained in performing FNA biopsy.

How is the fine needle aspiration done?

The cytopathologist will make sure you are in a comfortable position before starting the procedure. The area may be numbed with a local anesthetic, but this step is optional. Many people find the FNA biopsy to be less painful than the anesthetic injection. If the mass can be felt, the cytopathologist will use his/her fingers to hold it in place while moving a thin needle back and forth several times through the mass. This will draw a few drops of tissue into the needle for testing. If the mass is difficult to feel, an ultrasound device may be used to locate the mass and help guide the needle into the proper position. Pressure will be applied to the area after the needle is removed.

What are the potential complications of fine needle aspiration?

Although the procedure is not painless, any discomfort after the procedure is usually from mild bruising, swelling, and/or soreness of the area. An ice pack can help.

- *This procedure is very similar to having your blood drawn*
- *The FNA biopsy will be performed by a cytopathologist (physician who specializes in performing this procedure and in interpreting the material obtained)*
- *Before the procedure, no special preparation is needed*
- *After the procedure, you may experience some mild bruising, swelling, and/or soreness, an ice pack can help*



Fine Needle Aspiration

(directions to your appointment)

Head & Neck Oncology Clinic

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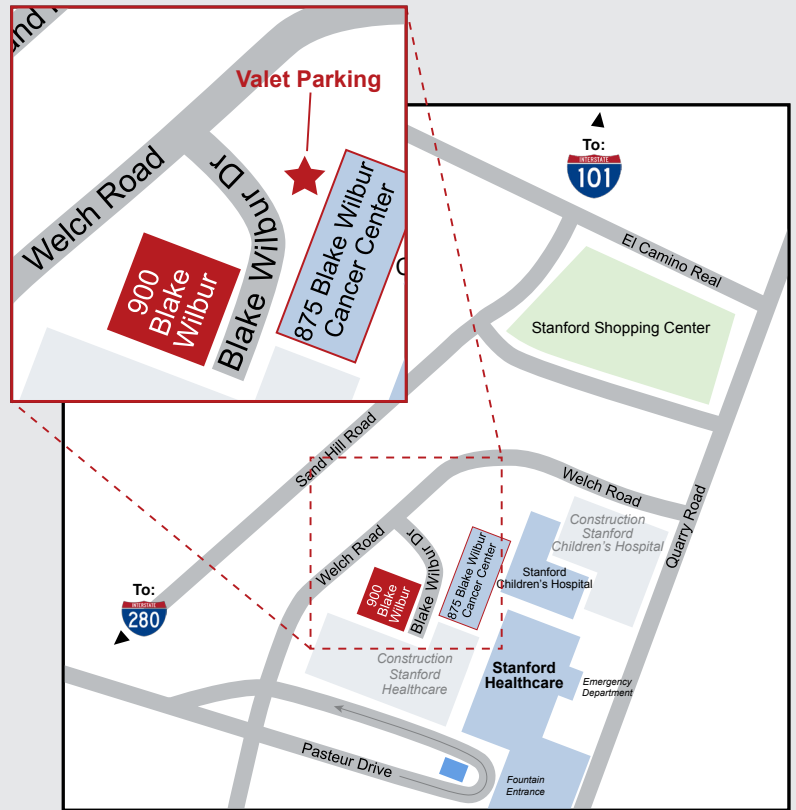
From I-280:

- Take the Sand Hill Road exit
- Turn right onto Pasture Drive
- Turn left onto Welch Road
- At the first light, turn right onto Blake Wilbur Drive
- Valet Parking is available directly across the street at 875 Blake Wilbur, the first hour is free
- Follow the road to the valet stand

From US Highway 101:

- Take the University Avenue exit
- From the North, turn left onto University
- From the South, turn right onto University
- Continue onto Palm Drive
- Turn right on Arboretum Road
- Turn left onto Quarry Road
- Turn right onto Welch Road
- At the second light, turn right onto Blake Wilbur Drive, follow the road to the valet stand

Please check in at the Head and Neck Oncology Clinic on the 3rd floor



VA Palo Alto Health Care System

3801 Miranda Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94304

From I-280:

- Take exit 20 for Page Mill Road toward Arastradero Road/Palo Alto
- Turn right onto Foothill Expressway
- Turn left onto Hillview Avenue

From US Highway 101:

- Take the Oregon Expwy exit
- Keep left, follow signs for Embarcadero Road E/ Oregon Expressway
- Keep left, follow signs for Oregon Expressway
- Continue onto Oregon Expressway
- Continue onto Page Mill Road
- Use the left 2 lanes to turn left onto Foothill Expressway
- Turn left onto Hillview Ave
- Turn right at the 1st cross street onto Miranda Avenue and turn left

