FINE NEEDLE ASPIRATIONS: COLLECTION, LABELING, AND PROCESSING OF SPECIMENS

I. Principle:
For processing fine needle aspirations of masses, cysts, and nodules for cytological evaluation to determine the presence or absence of malignant tumor cells, infectious processes or other diagnostic processes.

II. Ordering and Labeling:
- Order the test in EPIC using test code LAB13 for Non-Gyn cytology.
- Enter the Specimen Source.
- Enter the source description in the box on the same line at the far right of the screen.
- When the Specimen Source is entered, another box opens below it for an additional specimen.
- Fill in for as many specimens as needed. Sign the order.
- Go to the Collection activity.
- Select collect all and document collection information by:
  - Click on the pencil to edit all collection information for all specimens.
  - OR click on the blue hyperlinks for each specimen to edit only that specimen’s collection information
- NOTE: additional sources can be added and source description can be modified during collection ONLY before clicking on the Print Labels button.
- Click on Print Labels.
- Label the fixative vial using the EPIC generated label. If microscopic slides are used, label the slides with the patient’s name and medical record number using a pencil. Label the Microscopic slide container with the footie label.

Proper patient history is essential to the successful interpretation of a cytological specimen and is required by regulations. Any evaluation and report is, at best, incomplete without correlating the cytological studies with a complete patient history.
Improper labeling may cause the specimen to be returned for proper labeling, a delay while waiting for proper labeling or the specimen to be rejected and discarded.

III. Collection:
1. Following proper procedures, prepare the patient. For deep sites, guidance by imaging techniques is recommended. For superficial sites, isolate the mass between the fingers.
2. Introduce a 22-gauge needle attached to a syringe into the mass. Puncture the lesion several times, in a fanning pattern, while maintaining negative pressure on the syringe. Sample the walls of a cystic lesion in addition to draining the fluid. An 18-gauge needle may be used to penetrate deep or fibrotic areas. Thread the 22-gauge needle though the 18 gauge needle and sample the lesion.
3. Reduce the negative pressure and remove the needle.
4. Expel the material onto prelabelled slides. Gently spread the material across the slides and immediately immerse the slides in 95% alcohol. If more than 6 slides are made, expel the
remaining material into Cytolyt solution for preparation by laboratory personnel. Aspirations may be submitted with slides or with the aspiration expelled into the cytolyt solution only. Refrigeration is recommended if a delay in transport is expected. Do not add anticoagulants.