Biopsy Encyclopedia Article

Biopsy

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Biopsy

A *medical procedure used to diagnose a condition.*

Most biopsies involve taking a small piece of skin or muscle under a local anesthetic. When the cells to be analyzed are accessible by needle, the biopsy specimen may be removed with a hollow aspiration needle, which is used to suck out the sample of cells. Aspirations are typically performed with local anesthesia; in addition, ultrasound imagery or other scanning devices may aid in locating the cells of interest. In cases where the cells are not accessible by needle, a longer tube called an endoscope may be inserted into the body with forceps attached for acquiring the specimen. Biopsy analysis is used in diagnosing **cancer** and **muscular dystrophy.**

For Further Study

Books

Talking with Your Child about Cancer. Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute, 1994.

Young People with Cancer: a Handbook for Parents. Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute, 1982.