

**Patient
Information**

Pleural aspiration (Pleural tap)

Introduction

This leaflet provides information about the pleural aspiration procedure.

What is pleural aspiration (pleural tap)?

Pleural aspiration is a procedure to remove fluid from the chest. In some conditions, fluid can collect between the outside of the lung and the chest wall which may make it difficult to breathe. If this happens a pleural aspiration can be performed to relieve breathlessness.

Pleural aspiration is also used to obtain samples of fluid, which can be tested to try and find out what has caused the problem.

How is pleural aspiration done?

Pleural aspiration is a simple procedure which can be done as a day case on the ward, or in clinic. It is usually performed with you sat on the edge of a bed or chair, leaning forward slightly.



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An ultrasound scan is performed first to identify the best site for aspiration.

The skin is cleaned with antiseptic and a needle or thin tube is inserted into the chest, between the ribs.

Fluid can then be withdrawn using a syringe.

Local anaesthetic can be used to numb the skin if necessary.

After the procedure, a dressing is put over the aspiration site, which you can remove after 24 hours.

After the procedure your doctor may send you for a chest X-ray.

You will be observed for up to an hour before you go home.

Are there any risks?

There may be some brief discomfort, but this is usually minor and similar to having blood taken.

The risk of serious complications from pleural aspiration is very low.

As with any invasive procedure, there is a small risk of introducing infection into the chest or of causing bleeding. The risk of severe bleeding or damage from the needle is very low.

Occasionally air can enter the chest through the needle or can leak out from a hole in the lung. Rarely this may require a chest drain to be inserted and admission to hospital to resolve the problem.

Contact information

If you become unwell after the procedure or you require more information please contact Ward 8b, Dr Steer or Dr Bintcliffe's secretary.

Ward 8b

Tel: 0300 422 6760

Dr Steer's secretary

Tel: 0300 422 6564

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

Dr Bintcliffe's secretary

Tel: 0300 422 4346

Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm

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Further information

You can find more information about pleural aspiration by visiting the Patient.info website using the address below.

Patient.info

Website: www.patient.co.uk/doctor/pleural-effusionaspiration

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