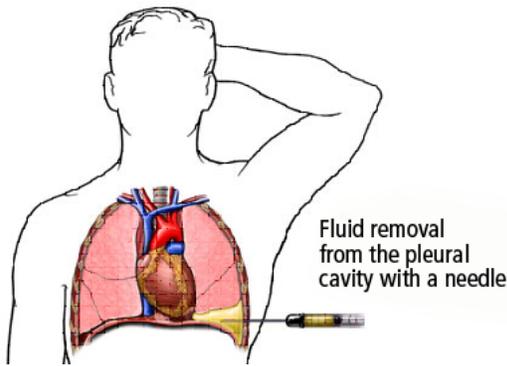


Thoracentesis



What is Thoracentesis?

Thoracentesis (thor-a-sen-TEE-sis) is a procedure used to remove fluid, air or blood from between the rib cage and the lung using a needle inserted between the ribs.

Why do I need thoracentesis?

A build up of fluid or air in the space between the lungs and the rib cage can make it difficult to breathe. The lung cannot fully expand. The fluid can also cause the lung to collapse.

Who will do the thoracentesis and where will it be done?

Your doctor will do the Thoracentesis at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.

Is there anything my doctor should know before the thoracentesis?

Tell your doctor if you:

- Take any medications.
- Have allergies to any medications, including anesthetics.
- Have any bleeding problems or take blood-thinners, such as aspirin or warfarin (Coumadin).
- Are or might be pregnant.

Is a thoracentesis painful?

You may feel stinging from the needle when the doctor numbs the area. This is done so that you do not feel any pain when the longer needle is inserted to remove the fluid.

How do I prepare for the thoracentesis?

You do not need to do anything special before the thoracentesis. Your doctor may order a chest x-ray or ultrasound before the procedure.

What happens during the thoracentesis?

You will sit and lean forward on a bedside table. An ultrasound may be used to locate the fluid in your chest. You will be given a needle to numb the area. Once the area is numb, the doctor will insert the needle between the ribs where the fluid has collected. You may feel some mild pain or pressure for a few seconds as the needle enters the space. A syringe or a small tube attached to a vacuum bottle removes the fluid. You may feel a “pulling” or pressure in your chest when the fluid is removed. Do not cough, breathe deeply, or move during the thoracentesis to avoid injury to the lung. Be sure to tell the doctor or nurse if you feel short of breath, chest pain, an uncontrollable cough, or feel faint. When the fluid is removed, the doctor will remove the needle or tube and apply a bandage.

Are there any side-effects or risks to the thoracentesis?

There are some risks associated with this procedure which include: lung collapse, bleeding, infection or breathing problems. Talk to your doctor about any concerns you have regarding the need for the procedure, its risks, and how it will be done.

What will happen after the procedure?

An X-ray is usually taken right after to make sure there are no problems. The thoracentesis takes about 10 to 15 minutes. If more fluid collects and needs to be removed, another thoracentesis may be done later. Expect to be at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre for 1.5 to 2 hours. You will not be allowed to drive yourself home. Arrange to have a family member or friend take you home after the procedure.

When to seek IMMEDIATE medical attention:

- Sudden or increasing shortness of breath.
- Fever greater than 101°F/38.5°C.
- A large amount of drainage or bleeding from the puncture site.
- Pain in your chest when you try to take a breath.

