

Imaging Department

Thoracentesis with Ultrasound Guidance

Your doctor has ordered an Ultrasound-Guided Thoracentesis for you. This procedure involves the removal of fluid from the pleural cavity/space around your lungs. For your safety, ultrasound imaging is used simultaneously to position the needle correctly in the pleural space and help decrease the possibility of complications.

PREPARATION:

- 1) You must be off your blood thinners and anti-platelet medications for 5-7 days before your procedure. The radiologist will review exceptions to this on a patient-by-patient basis.
- 2) You will need to have lab/blood work (PT, INR, PTT, and platelets) before the procedure.
- 3) You need to eat very lightly, or not at all, the day of the procedure.
- 4) You will need to sign a consent form before your procedure.
- 5) Please allot an hour of your time for this procedure to be completed.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE: For your safety, you will be asked a number of questions by the sonographer, nurse, and/or radiologist. Possible questions include, but are not limited to:

- What kind of symptoms are you having?
- Any previous surgeries?
- Do you have any medical allergies and any pertinent medical history?
- What prescription medication are you on?

THE PROCEDURE:

- 1) The staff will explain the procedure and any complications that might arise.
- 2) You will need to sit on the side of the bed, your feet hanging off the side, for 45-60 minutes.
- 3) You will need to change into a gown to expose your back.
- 4) The radiologist will scan the area to evaluate for the fluid amount and location. He/she will cleanse/sterilize that area and inject numbing medicine for your comfort. The radiologist will then introduce a needle/catheter into the chest/pleural cavity, connect a drainage tube to a bag, and drain the fluid slowly. There is some discomfort/ pressure, but it should be tolerable.
- 5) Your physician might have the fluid sent to lab/pathology for testing.
- 6) A chest x-ray may be ordered after procedure to evaluate the lungs.

AFTER YOUR TEST: You may resume your activities as you can tolerate. You will receive more detailed discharge instructions after the procedure is completed.

RESULTS: The radiologist will study your case and images and dictate a report. This will be transcribed for your ordering physician and faxed to his/her office within 48 business hours so that he/she can review and discuss it with you. Your sonographer is unable to give any report at the time of testing.

Every effort will be made to make you as comfortable as possible during your procedure. If you have any questions or concerns, please direct them to the Imaging staff at (574) 364-2819.