

# Pleural Tap

## Patient Information

Pleural tap (medical term is 'thoracocentesis') is a procedure to remove fluid from the space between the lining of the outside of the lungs (pleura) and the wall of the chest. Normally, very little fluid is present in this space. An accumulation of excess fluid between the layers of the pleura is called a pleural effusion. The test is performed to determine the cause of the fluid accumulation or to relieve the symptoms associated with the fluid accumulation.

**Precautions:** Tell your doctor if you have ever had an allergic reaction to the medicine lignocaine or the numbing medicine used at the dentist's office. If you take aspirin, **warfarin**, **clopidogrel** or other medicines that affect blood clotting ('blood thinning medications'), talk with your doctor. It may be necessary to stop these medicines before your test., and to have a blood test the day before you procedure to ensure your clotting time is normal.

### What preparation is require?

You need to fast for two (2) hours before your procedure.

Please bring in all your medications, any CT or X-rays that you have plus your Medicare card.

If you are having the procedure as a day case you will need to organise for someone to drive you home and stay overnight.

### What risks are there from the test?

There are a few serious risks from this procedure, but most patients have no complications. If the needle touches the lung it may create an air leak, which will be seen on the x-ray and might require you to stay in the hospital for a few days. Some patients with this complication need to have a plastic tube (a 'chest tube') inserted between two ribs. The tube uses vacuum pressure to keep the lung expanded until it has healed.

Other risks include bleeding into the fluid space or infection. Rarely, if a large amount of fluid is removed (more than one litre) the rapid pressure changes in your lung as it fills this space can cause some fluid to seep from your bloodstream into your lungs. This is called 'pulmonary oedema'. Let your doctor know if you feel shortness of breath following the procedure

After the fluid is removed, a bandage will be placed on your back. You will need to have an x-ray taken after the sampling is completed. Your breathing should feel the same (or better) after the procedure.

*"Respect, communication, involvement"*

The staff in Diagnostic Imaging want to make sure that you have understood the information that we have provided personally, as well as the information contained in the information sheet. We believe your understanding about why and how we are planning to assist you is very important.