



Pleural Tap

What Is a Pleural Tap?

A Pleural Tap is a procedure to drain fluid from the space surrounding the lung. This may be performed for several reasons, including to diagnose a condition or improve to comfort. This is usually done under ultrasound guidance.

What Happens During the Pleural Tap?

You will be positioned sitting on the side of the bed, and leaning over a table. You will receive local anaesthetic to numb the area for the biopsy. The procedure will be performed with image guidance. A catheter (plastic tubing) may be inserted into the site to drain the fluid. The tube may be left in place to allow the fluid to drain into a bag.

Informed consent process and risks

You will be asked to sign a consent form, on the day of your procedure. Below are some of the risks of the procedure, these will be discussed with you on the day of your procedure

- Infection
- Bleeding and bruising
- Damage to surrounding structures
- Incomplete drainage of fluid
- Hospitalisation post procedure
- Pneumothorax (collapsed lung)

What Happens After The Pleural Tap?

- The drainage catheter may need to stay in place for up to an hour.
- You will be sent to the Day Procedure Unit to recover and be monitored.
- Once enough fluid has been drained space, the tube is removed by a doctor.
- A small waterproof dressing will be applied to the area.
- A chest Xray will be performed after the tube is removed.
- You will stay in the Day Procedure Unit for up to a further 4 hours for monitoring.

It is anticipated that you will be discharged from hospital on the same day however there is always the chance that you may need to stay overnight.

Please make sure you have someone to drive you home after the procedure and stay with you overnight. It is important that you do not drive yourself.

You will receive some discharge information on the day of your procedure from the team, with instructions on how to look after the wound.