

# Pleural Aspiration

Aintree University Hospital **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Thoracic Department  
Lower Lane  
Liverpool L9 7AL  
Tel:0151-525-5980

## What is a pleural aspiration?

Pleural aspiration is when a needle is passed between the ribs to remove fluid, air or pus from the space between the linings of the lungs (pleural space).

## Why is a pleural aspiration performed?

Pleural aspiration can be carried out to send samples for testing to try and explain the reason for the build up of fluid in the pleural space and/or to remove enough fluid to relieve the symptoms caused by a pleural effusion.

## What is involved?

The position to insert the needle will be identified using an ultrasound scan. You will either be sat on the edge of the bed leaning forwards or resting upright in the bed.

The area may be numbed with local anaesthetic. The needle is then passed between the ribs to where the fluid is and the sample is drawn off.

## When will I get the results of any tests?

If samples are sent to the laboratory for analysis it can take up to a week to get the results depending on the tests required.

Your consultant should have arranged an appointment for you to come to receive your results.

## Are there any risks?

Pleural aspiration is generally a very safe procedure. However, as with all medical procedures it does carry some risk.

**Discomfort:** The needle passing through the skin can cause some discomfort

## Pneumothorax (collapsed lung):

Occasionally (3% of cases) air can accumulate in the pleural space after a pleural aspiration. This can cause increased breathlessness.

If this happens you will need an x-ray to check for this complication. If you become very breathless please attend A&E. Otherwise contact us on the telephone number below.

**Bleeding:** Very rarely bleeding can occur after a pleural aspiration

**Failed procedure:** Sometimes it is not possible to obtain the fluid with a needle. If this happens your doctor will discuss this with you at the time.

## What happens after the procedure?

You will be observed for a short time after the procedure to make sure there are no immediate complications

**If you have any concerns about this procedure please contact Nurse Specialists:**

<b>Vanessa Beattie</b>	<b>0151 529 2960</b>
<b>Maria Guerin</b>	<b>0151 529 2494</b>
<b>Paula Shepherd</b>	<b>0151 529 2597</b>



### If you require a special edition of this leaflet

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**0151 529 4969**

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