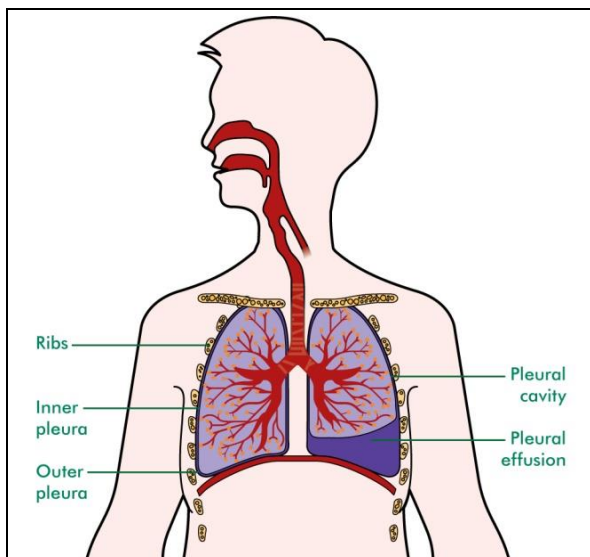


# Pleural Effusion - Fluid between the linings of the lungs

## What is a pleural effusion?

A pleural effusion is a collection of fluid on the outside of the lung between the two linings of the lung (the pleura).



## What causes pleural effusions?

There are many reasons why pleural effusion can occur.

These include infection, inflammation and some cancers.

## What symptoms can pleural effusions cause?

Pleural effusions can cause shortness of breath, chest wall pain and a cough.

## What tests might my doctor suggest?

To find out the cause of a pleural effusion there are a number of tests which may be suggested.

These include:

- Chest x-ray,
- CT scans of the chest
- Taking a sample of the pleural fluid (pleural aspiration).

Some patients will be advised to have a camera test to look in to the pleural space (medical thoracoscopy).

This test can diagnose the cause, remove all the fluid and minimise the chances of the fluid coming back.

## What are the treatments for a pleural effusion?

Your doctor will discuss treatment options with you.

The recommended treatment for a pleural effusion depends on the underlying cause.

Once we know the underlying cause it is possible to drain the fluid completely with a small tube passed

between the ribs which will then drain the fluid in to a bottle (chest drain).

Some patients will be offered a treatment called 'pleurodesis'.

This involves spraying talc into the pleural space to cause the 2 linings of the lung to stick together.

This minimises the chance of the fluid re-accumulating.

If the fluid recurs despite treatment your doctor may recommend a long term drain called an 'in-dwelling pleural catheter'.

This can be attached to a bottle either by the patient or the district nurse to allow intermittent removal of fluid in the community.



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