

Texas Lung Associates



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What is a Thoracentesis?

A thoracentesis is a procedure that allows the doctor to remove excess fluid from the space between the lungs and chest wall. This space is called the pleural space. An injection of medicine will be given to numb the area; the doctor will then insert a needle and/or plastic tube into the pleural space to draw out the excess fluid. The doctor will use an ultrasound to find the exact place to insert the needle and/or tube. This is an outpatient procedure performed at the hospital.

Preparation for the procedure

Food: You are permitted to eat and drink prior to the procedure.

Medications: If you are taking any type of blood thinning medication, the doctor will advise you to stop taking it prior to your procedure. Below is a chart listing the names of blood thinning medications and the amount of time they should be discontinued. Due to the increase of new blood thinning medications arriving on the market, you may not find your medication listed. Therefore, it is important confirm the medication with the doctor so he can advise you of the amount to time to discontinue it prior to your procedure.

| Blood thinning medications: | Amount of time they should be stopped prior to your procedure: |
|---|--|
| Coumadin (warfarin) Plavix (clopidogrel) Brilinta (ticagrelor) | 7 days |
| Aspirin | 5 days |
| Pradaxa | 3 - 5 days |
| Miradon (anisindione) | 72 hours |
| Eliquis (apixaban) | 24 - 48 hours |
| Clexane, Lovenox (enoxaparin) Fragmin (dalteparin) Arixtra (fondaparinux) Innohep (tinzaparin) Xarelto (rivaroxaban) Persantine (dipyridamole) | 24 hours |
| Heparin | 12 hours |

Please continue to take all other medications as directed, including inhalers and nebulizer treatments.

What to expect the day of the procedure

After you arrive at the hospital where your procedure is scheduled, you will check-in and register at outpatient/day surgery. Before the procedure, a radiology technician will perform an ultrasound of your chest to better direct the doctor during the procedure. Your blood may also be drawn if requested by the doctor.

The procedure will consist of you sitting on the edge of the bed, leaning forward and resting your arms on a table. You will be asked not to move, cough or breathe deeply once the procedure begins. You will be given an injection of numbing medication. The doctor will then insert the needle and/or tube between your ribs into the pleural space (the space between the lungs and chest wall). You may feel some discomfort and pressure at this time. Using the needle and/or tube, the doctor will draw out the excess fluid around your lungs. The fluid collected will be sent for testing.

After the procedure, you may have a chest x-ray to check for any lung problems. Your blood pressure and breathing will be monitored for at least 30 minutes to an hour after the procedure to ensure you are not having any complications.

It is normal to have a little pain and discomfort following the procedure. However, if you are having persistent pain, trouble breathing and/or coughing up blood, please call our office immediately at (940) 382-5864.

It may take a week or two to get test results. Therefore, you will be asked to make a follow-up appointment in the office to discuss your results.