

UNITED HOSPITAL CENTER

PATIENT EDUCATION

THORACENTESIS



Your physician has referred you to the Diagnostic Services Department at United Hospital Center for an Ultrasound guided thoracentesis. This procedure uses sound waves to help your physician find the best location in which to place a needle to relieve the fluid build-up in your chest.

You will be asked to wear a hospital gown and be positioned on a stretcher, sitting up with your feet hanging over the side. Your arms will be allowed to rest on a tray next to the stretcher.

The sonographer, a technologist specially trained in ultrasound, will expose your back in order to pass an ultrasound probe over it. Gel will be applied to your skin to prevent air from getting between the ultrasound source (probe) and your skin. The ultrasound probe is what locates the fluid collection for the sonographer and radiologist (physician). This spot will then be marked.

Your physician will then clean the area with an antiseptic, soap solution. He will then place a needle, followed by a thin tube, through your skin and into the fluid collection. The fluid will be withdrawn through this tube. It is very important to follow the instructions given by your doctor at this time regarding your breathing. When the fluid has been removed, the physician will remove the needle (tube) and a band-aide will be placed over the entry point.

Your physician should give you an order to have some blood work drawn, which should include clotting times that will need to be checked before the Thoracentesis will be performed. A chest x-ray will be taken shortly after this procedure to evaluate the status of your lungs.

LENGTH: Approximately 1 hour

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