After Your Ultrasound-guided Thoracentesis
If you had your procedure in Medical Specialties Center

This handout gives self-care guidelines for UW Medicine patients to follow after having an ultrasound-guided thoracentesis in the Medical Specialties Center.

What to Expect

• For 30 minutes to 1 hour after your procedure, you may:
  - Need to cough
  - Feel some tightness in your chest
  - Feel sharp, radiating pain when you take a deep breath
• The procedure site may be sore or tender as the anesthesia wears off.
• Your skin around the site may be a little discolored from the disinfectant. This will wash off.

If You Had Sedation

Some patients receive sedation (medicine to help you relax) for this procedure. If you had sedation, you may have these symptoms for a short time after your procedure:

• Feel tired, weak, or unsteady on your feet
• Have trouble concentrating or feel forgetful

For your safety and the safety of others:

• **For at least 12 hours**, do **not** do any activities that require you to be alert and in control.

• **For 24 hours**, do **not** drink alcohol or drive.

Activity

• Relax and do only light activity for the rest of the day.

• Do **not** shower or get the procedure site wet.
• **For 48 hours**, do **not** lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 10 pounds (a gallon of milk weighs about 8 pounds).

### Self-care

- Remove the bandage about 24 hours after your procedure.
- After you remove the bandage, you may shower or take a bath. **Do not scrub the site.** Wash the site gently and pat it dry.
- You may want to cover the site with a Band-Aid until it heals.
- Watch for signs of infection:
  - Redness, swelling, warmth, or pus at the procedure site
  - Fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)

### When to Call

Call your provider if you have:

- Ongoing fever, pain, redness, swelling, or dizziness
- Increased shortness of breath, chest tightness, or chest pain
- Bleeding from the puncture site
- Redness, swelling, or ongoing drainage around the site

### If You Have Questions or Concerns

- If you are a patient at **UW Medical Center** (UWMC):
  - Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Medical Specialties Center at **206.598.4615**.
  - After hours and on weekends and holidays, call **206.598.6190** and ask for the Pulmonary fellow on call to be paged.

- If you are a patient at **Harborview Medical Center** (HMC):
  - Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call the Ambulatory Procedure Area at **206.744.8088**.
  - After hours and on weekends and holidays, call **206.744.3000** and ask for the Pulmonary fellow on call to be paged.

### Urgent Issues

**Call 911 or go to nearest emergency room if:**

- You have heavy bleeding at the procedure site
- Your pain, shortness of breath, or chest tightness gets worse
- You feel very dizzy or lightheaded
- The site suddenly becomes firm and very painful