UW Medicine

Ultrasound: After Your Guided Thoracentesis

Self-care guidelines

This handout is for patients at University of Washington Medical Center who have had an ultrasound-guided thoracentesis.

What to Expect

• For 30 minutes to 1 hour after your procedure, you may:
  - 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 local anesthesia wears off.

• Your skin around the procedure site may be a little discolored from the disinfectant. This will wash off.

Activity

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

• Do not shower or get the procedure site wet.

• For 24 hours, do not lift or push 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.

• Watch for signs of infection:
  - Redness, swelling, warmth, or pus at the procedure site
  - Fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)
If You Have Questions or Concerns

During office hours, between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., call one of the numbers listed below if you have:

- Mild fever, pain, redness, swelling, or dizziness
- Mild shortness of breath, chest tightness, or chest pain
- Any other non-urgent questions or concerns

Who to Call

If you are a patient at:

- **University of Washington Medical Center** (UWMC), call:
  - Body Procedures Service ............................................. 206.598.3725
  - Body Procedures Nurse Practitioner .............................. 206.598.7977
  - Procedure Coordinator ................................................ 206.598.0124
  After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.6190 and ask for the Body Imaging fellow on call to be paged.

- **Harborview Medical Center** (HMC), call:
  - Body Procedures Service Reading Room ....................... 206.744.6913
  After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.744.3109 and ask for the Body Imaging fellow on call to be paged.

If You Have Urgent Issues

Call 911 or go to nearest emergency room if:

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

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

- UWMC Imaging Services: 206.598.6200
- Harborview Imaging Services: 206.744.3105