

UW Medicine

After Your Ultrasound-guided Thoracentesis

If you had your procedure in Medical Specialties

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.



After your procedure, do only light activity for the rest of the day.

- **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

Questions?

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