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Ultrasound: After Your Guided Thoracentesis

If you had your procedure in the Radiology department

This handout gives self-care guidelines for UW Medicine patients to follow after having ultrasound-guided thoracentesis.

What to Expect

- For up to 1 hour after your procedure, you may feel:
 - A need to cough
 - Some tightness in your chest
 - Sharp, radiating pain when you take a deep breath
- Your procedure site may be sore or tender as the local anesthesia wears off.
- The disinfectant we used to clean the site may have stained your skin. It will wash off.

Activity

Relax and do only light activities for the rest of the day.

For 24 Hours

- Do **not** shower or get the procedure site wet.
- Do **not** lift, push, or pull anything that weighs more than 10 pounds (a gallon of milk weighs almost 9 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)



After your procedure, relax for the rest of the day.

Who interprets the results and how do I get them?

If fluid studies were sent, your own provider will review the results and talk with you about them. You and your provider will then decide the next step, such as treatment for a problem, as needed.

You may also read your results on your MyChart page. If you need copies of your images on disc, call 206.598.6206.

If You Have Questions or Concerns

During office hours, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 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

Urgent Care

Call 911 or go to nearest emergency room right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- Severe bleeding that will not stop, even after you apply pressure to the procedure site
- Chest pain
- Trouble breathing
- Slurred speech
- Balance problems, dizziness, or trouble using your arms or legs

Questions?

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

UWMC – Montlake:
206.598.6209, option 2

UWMC – Northwest:
206.598.6209, option 3

Harborview Medical Center:
206.744.2857

After hours and on weekends and holidays:
Call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the Interventional Radiology resident on call.

Who to Call

University of Washington Medical Center and Northwest Hospital

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call the Interventional Radiology Department:

- Montlake: 206.598.6209, option 2
- Northwest: 206.598.6209, option 3

Harborview Medical Center

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., call the Interventional Radiology Department at 206.744.2857.