

Heimlich-Like Valved Chest Tube Placement

Patient Information Sheet

A chest tube has been inserted into the area surrounding your lungs. The Heimlich Valve is a one-way valve that pushes itself open to allow air and fluid to exit your chest when you exhale, and closes to prevent the air from reentering your chest when you inhale.

We are sensitive to your needs and concerns and want to let you know your safety and well-being are our primary concern. These instructions will help you understand the recovery process.

Instructions after Chest Tube Placement

- Rest for the remainder of the day following your procedure.
- Have a responsible adult spend the night with you the night of your procedure.
- Do not drive for the 24 hours following your procedure.
- Do not lift anything weighing over 5 kilograms (10 pounds) for 48 hours following your procedure.
- You should see the passage of air through the valve.
- Always ensure that the tube is not kinked, and that it remains secured in the position that it was inserted.
- Some Heimlich Valves have a gauze covered tip that allows air to escape. **Do not** obstruct the tip of the valve; it must remain uncovered to allow air flow.
- **Do not** clamp the chest tube unless you are instructed to do so by the doctor.

Diet

- You can eat what you normally eat.

Medications

- If needed for pain or discomfort, take Tylenol (acetaminophen) for the next 48 hours. Follow the directions on the label.
- **Do not** use Aspirin or ibuprofen products, such as Advil or Motrin, as it may increase the chance of bleeding.



Dressing Care/Sutures

- Clean around the tube insertion site once per week.
- Change the gauze dressing weekly or as needed.

Bathing

- You may shower or sponge bath, but always keep the dressing dry.
- **Do not** bathe or swim while the tube is in place, as water can damage the working the valve.

What to watch for

- If the valve comes apart from the chest tube, reconnect it immediately, and watch for the fluttering of the valve as you breathe. Call your doctor.
- If you have a drainage container that is almost full, call your doctor
- Sudden or increased shortness of breath
- Sudden or increased chest pain
- Feeling unusually faint or light-headed
- Fever more than 100°F (38°C) or chills
- Redness, excessive swelling, or discharge from the site

If you experience any of the above changes call your doctor, Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000), or go to your closest Emergency Department. Take this sheet with you.

Please call as soon as possible for a follow up appointment with your referring doctor,

Dr. _____, to discuss next steps, or tube removal.

