

# Thoracentesis

## Patient Information Sheet

A thoracentesis is a procedure to remove fluid that has accumulated between the outside surface of the lungs and the chest wall. This is called the pleural space. A therapeutic thoracentesis is done to relieve the pressure on the lungs and make it easier to breathe. For diagnostic purposes, your doctor may want to collect a specimen for laboratory testing. Laboratory analysis may take from seven to ten (7-10) days.

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 Thoracentesis

- 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 24 hours following your procedure.
- Do not lift anything weighing over 5 kilograms (10 pounds) for 48 hours following your procedure.
- Do not participate in sports or strenuous activity for 48 hours following your procedure.

### 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 bleeding.
- You may resume your routine medications, unless otherwise instructed by your doctor.

### Dressing Care/Sutures

- Remove the gauze dressing (Band-Aid) 24 hours after the procedure.



## Bathing

- You may shower the day following your procedure.
- **Do not** bathe or swim (especially in lakes) for one week as this may cause an infection at the puncture site.

## What to watch for

- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Severe chest pain not caused by the procedure
- Coughing up blood
- Fever of more than 100°F (38°C) or chills
- Redness, swelling, or discharge from the puncture site
- Excessive bleeding and/or a bloody dressing

**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 the results of this procedure.

