

Patient Information

Abdominal Drainage/Paracentesis/ Peritoneal Tap

What is an Abdominal Drain?

This is a procedure where abnormal fluid from your abdomen is removed. It is usually performed using ultrasound, or occasionally CT guidance.

There are two main types,

- Diagnostic – in which a small sample of fluid is collected for pathological analysis to gain more information.
- Therapeutic – in which a large amount of fluid is removed to make you feel more comfortable, decrease abdominal distension and ease your breathing.

Preparation

No preparation is required although it is important to contact us and let us know if you are taking any blood thinning medications.

We require you to come with **someone to assist you and drive you home after the procedure**. Public transport is not acceptable. *Should your circumstances be that you do not have anyone to accompany you, please contact us immediately to discuss.*

How long will it take?

A diagnostic tap will take approximately twenty (20) minutes. A therapeutic drain can take up to two hours, depending on how much fluid is removed and how fast it flows out.

What to expect

You will be changed into a gown and an ultrasound or CT will then be performed to find a suitable area where fluid has collected (usually in your lower abdomen). This spot is marked, the skin cleaned, and local anaesthetic injected. For a diagnostic drain, a longer needle will be inserted and some fluid removed.

For a therapeutic drain, a special needle or tube will be inserted, taped into place and connected to a bag. Fluid will drain into the bag. When enough fluid has drained, the needle/drain will be removed, and a waterproof dressing placed over the needle site. If you are feeling well, you will be free to go home. You will be awake throughout the procedure.

After Your Examination

A waterproof dressing is applied at the needle site. Please leave this on for twenty-four (24) hours. Following this, the dressing can then be removed. You may have a shower, but please refrain from baths and swimming for twenty-four (24) hours following the procedure.

If any of the following develop, please consult your doctor or contact us on (02) 9170 4500 during office hours. If you cannot get on to anyone and feel concerned, please attend your local hospital:

- Fever
- Redness or swelling at the needle site
- The needle site is warm to touch
- Excessive or continued drainage from the needle site
- Bleeding from the needle site

Possible Side-Effects and Complications

There are some complications that may occur from this procedure. The main ones include:

- Discomfort at the needle site
- Small amount of fluid leakage at the needle site following the procedure.

Rarer complications may include:

- Infection at the needle site or within the abdomen.
- Bleeding at the needle site
- Internal bleeding (note: frequently the fluid is blood stained and this does NOT mean there has been internal bleeding).
- Damage to internal organs
- Insufficient fluid to allow for drainage

Note: Paracentesis does not treat why the fluid has accumulated in the abdomen. Patients who require a therapeutic paracentesis, often have re-accumulation of the fluid and may require these procedures on a regular basis.

Questions?

You will be given the opportunity to ask any questions of the technicians or radiologist at the time of your procedure, however if you have any queries prior to the appointment, please feel free to contact us by phone or email – 02 9170 4500 or contact@nsrnm.com.au

If you have any questions regarding **why** the drainage is required, these should be directed to your specialist or the doctor looking after you. We are happy to re-schedule your booking so you can discuss it with your doctor.