

What is Paracentesis/ Thoracentesis?

A paracentesis is the removal of fluid from the abdomen. A thoracentesis is the drainage of fluid from the chest. These procedures are usually done to relieve symptoms you may be having. Fluid in your chest will cause shortness of breath and fluid in your abdomen will cause distention and pain. Sometimes the fluid is sent to a pathologist to determine the cause for the fluid collection.

The radiologist will locate the fluid collection with ultrasound. He will numb the skin with a local anesthetic like the dentist uses. A needle will be inserted and connected to a bottle to drain the fluid.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

- There is nothing you need to do prior to having these procedures. Usually you will come to see your doctor because of symptoms you are having and your doctor will ask the radiologist to drain the fluid that same day.
- You may have lab work done prior to the procedure.
- You could spend 30 minutes in our recovery area, depending on whether this is the first time you have had the Paracentesis or Thoracentesis. Usually there is no recovery time for this procedure.

Medication Instructions for all Interventional Procedures:

- You must be off your blood thinners for 5 days prior to procedure. These medications include aspirin, Plavix, Coumadin (Warfarin), and Pletal. If you are on any of these medicines, please inform the doctor that prescribed them before stopping them. Please notify your West Cancer Center nurse or doctor if they are not aware you are taking these medicines. If you have any questions regarding your meds, including if they are blood thinners, please call **901-922-6707**.
- Take any additional routine medications the day of the procedure. If you are on insulin ask your doctor about any adjustments that may be needed.
- Your arrival time is 1 ½ hours prior to your procedure. We will need the additional time to do necessary lab tests, start an IV, ask pre-procedural questions and do a nursing assessment.
- Following the procedure you will need to recover in a bed at our facility for 4 to 6 hours before going home.

You will need someone to drive you home. You will not be allowed to drive yourself. If you do not have someone to drive you your test will be rescheduled. You cannot use public transportation.

Post Paracentesis/ Thoracentesis Follow-Up Instructions

- Take it easy the remainder of today.
- Leave band-aid on for a day.
- Do not lift anything greater than 5 pounds for 24 hours.
- If you have any questions or concerns during office hours please call West Cancer Center at 901.683.0055.
- If it is after hours and you need assistance, Please call 901.683.0055 and ask for the radiologist on call. Someone will call you ASAP.