



Having a PleurX® Catheter Put In

What is a pleural effusion?

A pleural effusion is the buildup of fluid between your lungs and your chest wall. This buildup of fluid may make you feel short of breath (have difficulty breathing).

What is a PleurX® catheter?

A PleurX® catheter is a thin tube that is put just under the skin in your chest and into the space around your lung. This tube allows the buildup of fluid to drain out before it becomes uncomfortable for you. Your PleurX® catheter will be put in by a respirologist, at the Durham Regional Cancer Centre.

Getting ready to have your PleurX® Catheter Put In

- If you are taking a blood thinning medication, ask your respirologist or nurse about stopping it before you have your PleurX® catheter put in.
- You will be told if you are to have bloodwork done before your PleurX® catheter is put in.
- You will be told if you are to have a chest x-ray before your PleurX® catheter is put in. The chest x-ray will show the respirologist how much fluid is around your lungs.
- You will be referred to the Central East Local Health Integration Network (CE LHIN) - Home and Community Care program for the care of your PleurX® catheter at home.

On the day you have your PleurX® catheter put in

- It will be helpful to have someone come with you to this appointment.
- Bring a list of the medications you are taking.
- The respirologist and a nurse will tell you how your **PleurX®** catheter will be put in. They will answer any questions you may have. You will be asked to sign a consent form.
- You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and lay down on a stretcher.
- The respirologist will use an ultrasound machine to see how much fluid is around your lungs.
- You will meet with a care coordinator from the CE LHIN to arrange for the supplies you will need and a visiting nurse to see you in your home. The visiting nurse will monitor your symptoms and drain fluid through your PleurX® catheter as needed.

Having your PleurX® catheter put in

- You will be awake when your PleurX® catheter is put in.
- Your skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution in the area where the catheter will be put in. This same area will be numbed with an injection of an anaesthetic medication.
- Your PleurX® catheter will be put in through a small incision into your skin and into the space around your lung. A second small incision will be made where the catheter is placed under your skin. Your catheter will be kept in place with stitches. The stitches will be taken out after about 10-14 days when the area is healed. A waterproof dressing will be put on over the small

incisions. A label with the contact information for the Thoracic Diagnostic Assessment (DAP) Program will be placed on the waterproof dressings.

After you have your PleurX® catheter put in

- You will have a chest x-ray after the catheter is inserted. The respirologist will look at your x-ray before you leave the hospital.
- Ask the respirologist or nurse when you can start taking your blood thinning medication again.
- You may feel tired after your PleurX® catheter is put in. You may want to arrange to have someone drive you home.

When you go home

- Rest for the remainder of the day.
- It is normal for you to have a small amount of pain or discomfort after you have your PleurX® catheter put in. You may take an over the counter pain medication if you need to (for example acetaminophen/Tylenol or a medication you would normally take).
- You can have a shower or bath the day after your PleurX® catheter is put in. It is important to make sure that your dressing is completely covered with the waterproof dressing.
- Call your visiting nurse if the dressing becomes loose or the gauze pads underneath the waterproof dressing get wet.
- 24 hour support is available from the Thoracic DAP Program if your visiting nurse has a question or concern about your care. The thoracic nurse navigator is available 8 am to 4 pm from Monday to Friday (except on holidays). A respirologist, or a thoracic surgeon is available after hours and as needed.

Frequently asked questions

Question: When will the visiting nurse come to see me in my home?

Answer: A visiting nurse from the CE LHIN will come to your home the day after your PleurX® catheter is put in. The visiting nurse will drain your PleurX® catheter as ordered by the respirologist. This will be about 2-3 times a week. Call the visiting nurse if you are feeling short of breath (have difficulty breathing). The visiting nurse may call the Thoracic DAP Program if there are any questions about your care.

Question: How long will the PleurX® catheter have to stay in?

Answer: The PleurX® catheter will usually stay in until the fluid stops draining. This is different for everyone. It may be for weeks or even months.

Question: When do I need to call my visiting nurse?

Answer: Call your visiting nurse if you have:

- Redness, swelling, or severe pain around the area where the PleurX® catheter was put in
- A fever higher than 38.0° C/100.4° F
- Any bleeding from the area where the PleurX® catheter was put in
- A new cough or your cough is getting worse
- Any new shortness of breath or your shortness of breath is getting worse
- A dressing that comes loose or your gauze pads are wet
- Any questions or concerns about your PleurX® catheter

Go to the emergency department at the hospital closest to you if:

- You have a sudden increase in your shortness of breath.
- Your PleurX® catheter comes out or becomes damaged in any way.

Let the visiting nurse know that you are going to the Emergency Department. Take your PleurX® information poster and kit with you.

Important phone numbers

Thoracic DAP Program

1-877-291-5956 or 905-576-8711 extension 32743

The Central East Local Health Integration Network (CE LHIN) – Home and Community Care

The name of your care coordinator: _____

1-800-263-3877 at extension: _____

The name of your visiting nurse _____

Last revised: December 2018