

Introduction

There is always a small amount of fluid in the pleural space. The fluid helps to lubricate the area during respiration. Too much fluid in this space can make breathing difficult. Pleural Tapping and Biopsy is a minor surgical procedure which helps the doctor to find out the reason and nature of the effusion and to relieve symptoms.

The Operation

1. Sit upright on the edge of a bed or chair, relaxed, putting arms to a position as instructed by doctor or nurse.
2. The skin will be sterilized by antiseptic solution and draped with sterile towel. Don't touch the sterile towel to prevent infection.
3. Pain relief is provided by local anaesthetic.
4. A needle or catheter is put into the pleural space through a skin nick and adjusted to improve gas or fluid extraction.
5. Pleural tissue is taken (Biopsy) in order to find out the cause of disease.
6. After the procedure, sterile gauze and pressure dressing will be applied.

Preoperative Preparation

1. A written consent is required.
2. No need to fast for this elective procedure if it is done under local anaesthesia.

Postoperative Instruction

A. General

1. Mild discomfort or pain over the operation site. Inform nurse or doctor if pain severe.
2. Bed rest, using a semi-recumbent position to facilitate lung expansion. Change position regularly to facilitate drainage from the chest cavity.
3. Early mobilization with deep breathing and coughing exercise to recuperate lung function and prevent chest infection.

B. Wound Care

1. Keep dressing clean and dry.
2. Ensure the drainage tube is in right place. Do not pull, twist, clamp or apply pressure.
3. The drains will be removed in 2-7 days.

Common Risks and Complications

1. Common: cough, mild pain and mild bleeding.
2. Uncommon: vasovagal syncope and failed tapping.
3. Rare but serious: pneumothorax, massive bleeding, re-expansion pulmonary oedema, pleural space infection, death.

Things to take note after discharge

1. Contact your doctor or a nearby Accident & Emergency Department if you find increasing discharge, pain or redness around the wound, high fever over **38°C or 100°F**, etc.
2. Take analgesics prescribed by your doctor as necessary.
3. Keep the wound dressing clean and dry, change the dressing if necessary.
4. The breathing exercises should be continued to help with recovery.
5. Resume daily activity gradually. Heavy lifting and strenuous exercises should be avoided for 1 - 2 months.
6. Attend follow-up consultations as scheduled.

Remarks

This is general information only and the list of complications is not exhaustive. Other unforeseen complications may occasionally occur. In special patient groups, the actual risk may be different. For further information please contact your doctor. Evangel Hospital reserves the right to amend this leaflet without prior notice. We welcome suggestions or enquiries on the information provided in this leaflet. Please contact our Healthcare professionals so that we could follow up and make improvement.

Reference

Hospital Authority: “胸膜穿刺引流和抽取胸膜組織 (Pleural Tapping and Biopsy)” (2018)

Smart Patient: http://www.ekg.org.hk/public/pdfReader.jsp?http://www.ekg.org.hk/pilic/public/Paed_PILIC/Paed_PleuraTappingandBiopsy_0269_chi.pdf (13-07-2023)