

After Your Thoracentesis

Important self-care instructions

This handout gives important self-care instructions to follow after your thoracentesis.

For 24 Hours

- The medicine that you were given to make you sleepy will stay in your body for several hours. It could affect your judgment. Because of this, until the day after your procedure, or for 24 hours:
 - Do not drive a car.
 - Do not use machinery or power tools.
 - Do not drink alcohol.
 - Do not take medicines such as tranquilizers or sleeping pills, unless your doctor prescribed them.
- We strongly advise you to do only light activities and get plenty of rest.
- Keep the puncture site clean and dry.



For 48 Hours

- Do not do any heavy work or exercise.
- Do not lift or push anything that weighs more than 10 pounds. (A gallon of milk weighs 8 pounds.)

Puncture Site Care

- You may bathe as usual 24 hours after your procedure.
- Do not apply creams or lotions to the puncture site.
- You may want to cover the puncture site with a Band-Aid until it is healed. If you use a Band-Aid, change it daily and watch the site over the next few days.
- It is normal to have some discomfort or bruising at the puncture site for several days.

When to Call

Call one of the numbers below if you have:

- Increased shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Pain when you take a deep breath
- A cough that brings up blood
- Changes at the puncture site:
 - Bleeding
 - Redness or swelling
 - Drainage that does not lessen
- Fever higher than 101°F (38.3°C)

Who to Call

If you have any of the symptoms listed above:

- Weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., call the Ambulatory Procedure Area (APA) at 206-744-8088.
- After hours and on weekends and holidays, call the Community Care Line Nurse at 206-744-2500.

Follow-up Visit

Return to the _____ clinic to see

Dr. _____

on _____ at _____ a.m./p.m.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

HMC Ambulatory Procedure Area: 206-744-8088