Chest drainage is a procedure to drain fluid from the pleural space, between the lung and chest wall. Inflammation, infection and traumatic injury, among other things, can cause fluid to build up in the cavity.

Please read this form so you understand the procedure and its risks. Ask questions about anything you do not understand.

**HOW IS CHEST DRAINAGE PERFORMED?**
First we will perform an ultrasound or CT scan to evaluate the amount and location of the fluid. Then the doctor will inject a local numbing medicine at the site where the fluid will be drained.

The doctor will guide a small needle through the skin and into the fluid, and the fluid will be sucked out (aspirated) with a syringe. If it is likely that fluid will continue to accumulate, the doctor will place a drainage catheter, using live X-ray (fluoroscopy) for guidance. Your child will be protected by an X-ray shield.

**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FLUID THAT IS DRAINED?**
A small amount of chest fluid may be sent to the laboratory to determine the cause of the accumulation.

**WILL MY CHILD BE AWAKE DURING THE PROCEDURE?**
Younger patients are usually given IV sedation so they aren’t awake during the procedure. If the child is older or has medical problems that prevent us from giving IV sedation, we will use only local numbing medicine.

**HOW LONG DOES THE PROCEDURE TAKE?**
Approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

**WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF CHEST DRAINAGE?**
This procedure is considered low-risk. However, potential complications include:

- bleeding
- infection
- collapse of the lung (pneumothorax)
- bleeding into the chest (hemothorax)
- injury to surrounding structures such as veins or arteries

*continued*
WILL MY CHILD HAVE PAIN AFTER THE PROCEDURE?
Some children feel pain or discomfort at the needle-insertion site, usually in the first day or two after the procedure. You may give over-the-counter pain medication.

WHEN CAN MY CHILD BATHE?
We will place a bandage over the site. If your child doesn’t have a drainage catheter, you must keep the bandage dry and in place for 48 hours. Then you may remove the clear bandage and the gauze and your child can shower or take a bath as usual.

If a catheter was placed, the clear bandage and gauze must remain dry and in place until the catheter is removed. In addition, the catheter will be secured with a locking device (StatLock®) which must not be removed. You may sponge-bathe your child, as long as you keep the site dry.

ARE THERE ANY ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS?
If a drainage catheter was inserted, your child will need to avoid activities that may result in a pull to the catheter. Children who don’t have a drainage catheter may resume normal activity within two or three days.

CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCES ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:
- redness at the site
- drainage, such as pus, from the site
- fever higher than 101°F Fahrenheit
- dizziness or shortness of breath
- a pull or damage to the drainage catheter

CONTACT US
The Interventional Radiology team is here to help you and your child. Please ask us if you have any questions or if anything is not clear.

Call us between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 215-590-7000. At the first prompt push 1, and at the second prompt push 2.

At all other times, call 215-590-1000 and ask to speak to the interventional radiologist on call.

Thank you!