

*The* ROYAL MARSDEN

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## Insertion of a PleurX drain

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**Interventional Radiology**

**Patient Information**



**NHS**



## Introduction

Your doctor has asked that a PleurX drainage catheter (a thin tube) be placed in your abdomen (tummy) or chest (lungs). The catheter will allow the drainage of fluid from your abdomen or chest.

This leaflet explains what the procedure involves and the possible risks and complications you may experience. Your doctors will have discussed these with you. If you are still unsure about the benefits of having the procedure, please ask.

## What is a PleurX drain?

A PleurX drain is a permanent tunnelled drain placed by a radiologist using ultrasound guidance. This allows the drainage of fluid from your abdomen or chest at your home, reducing the need for you to attend hospital for each drain.

## Why do I need a PleurX drain?

The symptoms of ascites or pleural effusion can be very distressing. The abdomen becomes swollen and distended, which can be uncomfortable and painful. You may find it difficult to get comfortable, sit up or walk. It can make you feel tired or breathless and may cause feeling of sickness (nausea) or make you sick (vomiting). You may also suffer indigestion or reduced appetite or fever.

## Who has made the decision?

The doctors in charge of your care, and the doctor doing the drainage will have discussed your situation, and feel that this is the best treatment option. However, you will also have the opportunity for your opinion to be considered, and if, after discussion with your doctors, you do not want the procedure carried out, you can decide against it.

## Who will be inserting the drain?

A doctor called an interventional radiologist. These doctors are able to see what they are doing by using x-rays and other scanning equipment. They will be assisted by radiology nurses and radiographers, who will look after you throughout the procedure.

## Where will the procedure take place?

This procedure is carried out in a room in the x-ray (radiology) department.

## Are there any risks or complications?

PleurX drain insertion is a very safe procedure, but as with any medical procedure, there are some risks and complications that can arise.

- There is a risk of bleeding and bruising which is minimised by managing your blood thinning medication (if you are taking one) and checking your blood result to make sure it is normal and by using ultrasound to guide the drain into place.
- There is the risk of bowel perforation, if inserting the drain to your abdomen, which is minimised by using ultrasound to guide the drain into place.
- There is a risk of infection which is minimised by inserting your drain under sterile conditions.
- It is important that you or your caregiver is taught how to manage the drainage in a sterile manner, to reduce the risk of infection developing at a later stage.
- This will be taught by the ward staff prior to your discharge.

## Can I bring a relative or friend?

You may bring someone with you but for safety reasons they cannot accompany you into the x-ray room.

## When you arrive at The Royal Marsden

- If not an inpatient already, please report to the day care area, as specified on the letter or as informed by your doctors or specialist nurses.
- On arrival you will have a small tube (cannula) be placed in a vein in your arm or hand, so that you can be given fluids and receive medication while in the x-ray department.

- You will be allocated a bed on the ward, although you may not go there until after the procedure.
- We will ask you to change into a hospital gown.
- When the time comes for your procedure, you can either walk to the x-ray department or be taken there on a trolley.
- When you arrive in the x-ray department, a nurse will greet you and the radiologist will explain the procedure and discuss it with you before you sign the consent form. If you have any questions, this is a good time to ask the radiologist.

## What happens during the procedure?

- The radiologist will explain the procedure and risks to you and ask for your consent.
- You will also have monitoring devices attached to your arm and finger, and may be given oxygen through small tubes into your nose by a nurse who will be with you throughout the procedure.
- An initial ultrasound scan will be performed to assess the area to be drained.
- Under sterile conditions, the area will be cleaned with a cold antiseptic solution and the area draped with sterile drapes.
- The radiologist will inject the area with local anaesthetic to make the procedure more comfortable for you.
- There will be two small skin incisions made and the drain will be placed into position.

## Will it hurt?

When the local anaesthetic is injected, it will sting for a short while, but this soon wears off. Any pain you have should be controlled with painkillers. A nurse or another member of clinical staff will be close by throughout the procedure. You will be awake during the procedure and able to tell the radiologist if you feel any pain or discomfort.

## How long will it take?

Every patient is different, and it is not always easy to predict; however, expect to be in the department for about one hour.

## What happens afterwards?

- You will be taken back to your ward on a trolley.
- Nurses on the ward will carry out routine observations, such as taking your pulse and blood pressure to make sure that there are no problems.
- They will also look at the skin entry point to make sure there is no bleeding from it. You will generally stay in bed for a few hours, until you have recovered.
- You will usually be kept in hospital overnight, but occasionally you may be allowed home on the same day.
- The nurses on the ward will teach you how to manage the drain. They will also make a referral to the districts nurses in your community, who will visit you at home to check the drain.
- In most cases you will be able to eat and drink normally after the procedure.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about your procedure, or you are unable to attend for this appointment, please call:

**The Radiology Department**      020 7808 2571

Alternatively, please call:

**The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline:**

020 8915 6899 (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Should you require information in an alternative format, please contact The Royal Marsden Help Centre.

## Further information

### **The Royal College of Radiologists**

Website: [www.rcr.ac.uk](http://www.rcr.ac.uk) for general information about radiology departments

### **The British Society of Interventional Radiology**

Website: [www.bsir.org/](http://www.bsir.org/)

### **Macmillan Cancer Support**

Helpline: 0808 808 00 00 9am-8pm, Monday to Friday

Website: [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

## References

This booklet is evidence based wherever the appropriate evidence is available, and represents an accumulation of expert opinion and professional interpretation.

Details of the references used in writing this booklet are available on request from:

The Royal Marsden Help Centre

Freephone: 0800 783 7176

Email: [patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk](mailto:patientcentre@rmh.nhs.uk)

No conflicts of interest were declared in the production of this booklet.



The patient information service is generously supported by The Royal Marsden Charity.

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Registered Charity No.1095197

Reviewed July 2018. Planned review July 2021  
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