

PleurX[®] Catheter

Patient Information

Vancouver General Hospital
899 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver BC V5Z 1M9
Tel: 604-875-4111

Contact information

Physician Responsible for PleurX[®] Insertion:

Respirologist: _____

For Assistance Monday through Friday 8:00am-4:00pm
contact Respirologist responsible for PleurX[®] insertion
through the switchboard at 604-875-4111.

Thoracic Surgeon: _____

For Assistance Monday through Friday 8:00am-4:00pm
contact your surgeon via the Vancouver Thoracic Surgical
Group at 604-875-5551.

**Out of hours: If your enquiry is urgent please call
the respirology/thoracic surgery team on call via
the switchboard at 604-875-4111.**

Important information:

1. DO NOT remove the PleurX catheter without speaking with the physician who inserted it.
2. The valve at the end of the catheter requires a special connector to drain fluid. DO NOT attempt to use anything else, as this will permanently damage the catheter and a new one will need to be inserted.
3. If you require assistance after hours, on weekends, or on statutory holidays go to your nearest emergency department.
4. Always bring a drainage kit (supplied by your home care nurse) with you if you have to go to the emergency room.

Introduction

Your doctor has recommended that a tunneled pleural drainage (PleurX®) catheter be placed in your chest. The PleurX® catheter will allow you to drain the fluid that is building up around your lungs. This pamphlet tells you how to use and care for the catheter. Please read the pamphlet so that you can discuss anything that is not clear with your doctor or nurse.

What is a PleurX® catheter?

A PleurX® catheter is a narrow soft tube that is placed in the chest or abdomen to drain excess fluid. It has a one-way valve that allows the fluid to come out, but does not allow air to go in. The one way valve also stops fluid coming out when not in use.

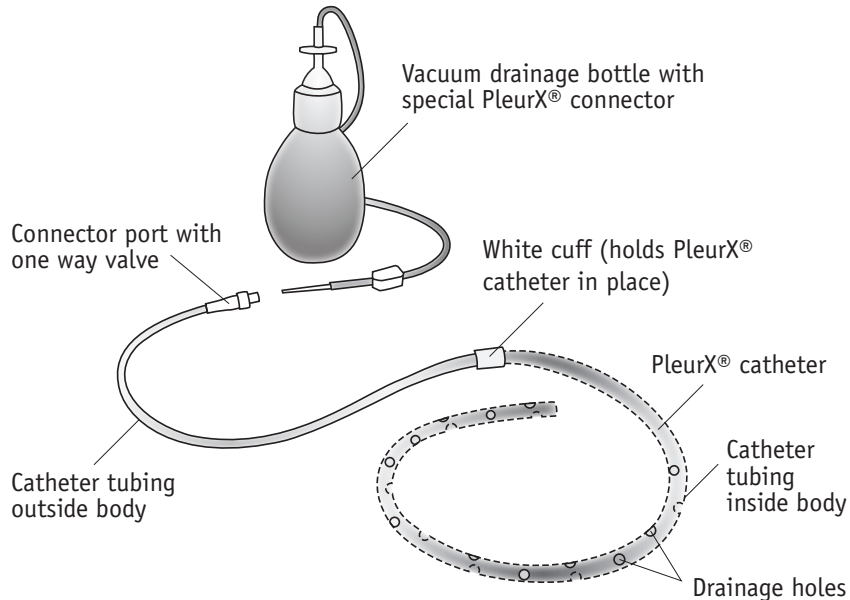


Figure 1: PleurX® Catheter and Drainage Bottle

Why has your doctor recommended a PleurX® catheter?

PleurX® catheters are inserted to manage excess fluid buildup around the lungs in the pleural space. The pleura are sac-like membranes that cover your lungs. Between the inner and outer membranes of the pleura is a thin film of fluid that makes it easy for the lungs to expand and contract. However, if too much fluid accumulates in this space, it can limit the ability of your lungs to expand. This can make you feel short of breath, cause pain and coughing. Fluid may accumulate around one or both lungs. This excess fluid is called a pleural effusion.

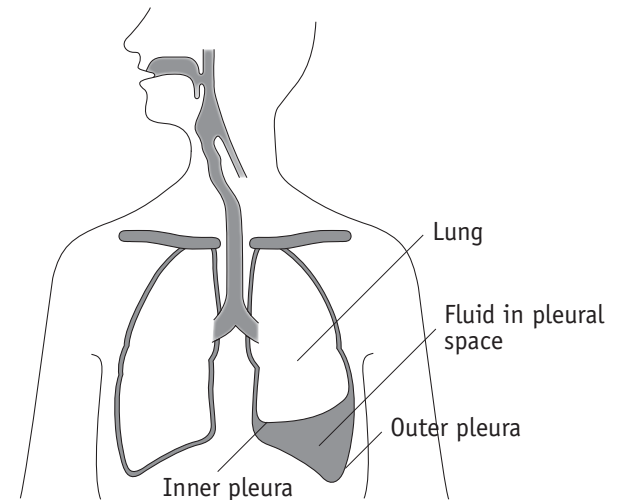


Figure 2: Left Pleural Effusion

How long will the PleurX® catheter stay in place?

This depends on the reason behind the fluid buildup. Sometimes the fluid buildup can be treated with medicines and the PleurX® catheter can be removed. However, the PleurX® can stay in place forever.

Preparing for Your Procedure

You may need to stop taking some of your medicines. Ask your doctor what to do if you take:

- Blood thinners such as Coumadin® (warfarin), Plavix® (clopidogrel), Aspirin or injectable heparin.
- Medicine for diabetes.

Call your doctor if you develop any illness within two days of your procedure. This includes a fever, cold, flu, or a sore throat. Arrange for someone to take you home. You will not be able to drive.

The night before your procedure:

Do not eat solid food after midnight the night before your procedure.

You may drink clear liquids up to three hours before your procedure. These include:

- Water
- Apple or cranberry juice
- Coffee or tea without milk
- Jell-O®

The Day of Your Procedure:

You may shower, but do not apply any cream or lotion to your chest and back area.

Take all medicines you normally take (except blood thinners, and any that your doctor told you not to take) with water or another clear liquid.

If you are coming in from home for the procedure:

- Check in at “Admitting” 2 hours prior to your procedure. This is located on the first floor of the Jim Pattison Pavilion.
- Bring your medicines with you (both prescription and over the counter medicines or herbal remedies).
- Leave valuables at home.
- Bring only the money you need (e.g., for a newspaper or parking costs).

The PleurX® catheter will be placed by a doctor in the Bronchoscopy unit on the Ground Floor of Jim Pattison Pavilion. It takes about an hour.

The Procedure

An intravenous (IV) line will be inserted into a vein in your arm. During the procedure, you will receive medicine through your IV line. The medicine will make you feel drowsy and will control pain. You will not be asleep.

If you have fluid around only one lung, the catheter will be placed on that side of your chest. If you have fluid around both lungs, your doctor will choose the best side for the catheter and may place one on each side. The doctor will cleanse the area with an antiseptic solution and place sterile drapes. The area will then be numbed at the selected site with a local anesthetic.

The PleurX® catheter will be inserted through a small incision and tunneled under your skin into the pleural space.

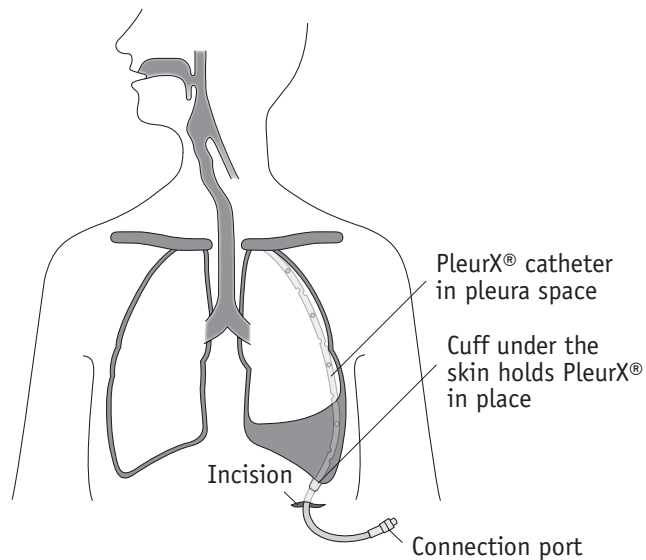


Figure 3: PleurX® Catheter Inserted

When the insertion procedure is complete, the catheter will either be capped or attached to a collection unit.

Once the local anaesthetic has worn off the catheter insertion site may become tender and you may need to take pain medicine for a few days.

After the Procedure

- You will need to be observed for about 2 hours after the procedure. You will also have a chest xray.
- You will usually go home the same day.
- You must not drive yourself home and must have someone to collect you. If you are staying in hospital after the procedure you will be transferred to the ward after the chest xray.
- After you have been discharged home if you develop a fever, worsening shortness of breath or worsening chest pain that is not relieved by pain killers seek medical advice.

Caring for Your PleurX® Catheter

A homecare nurse will help you look after your PleurX® catheter. You, a family member or a friend can also learn how to care for your PleurX® catheter.

To remove fluid from the chest a drainage bottle is attached to the PleurX® catheter 2-3 times a week. The number of drainages may be increased or decreased depending on your symptoms and the amount being drained. Your home care nurse will assess you on a regular basis and develop a plan of when to drain.

How will I know if I need drainage?

Drainage may be required if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Increased shortness of breath
- Increased cough
- Reduction in your ability to do tasks such as walking and bathing because of fatigue and shortness of breath
- A worsening sensation of pain or heaviness on the affected side

Contact your home care nurse if you think you need a drainage sooner than planned.

How will I feel during the drainage?

Drainage can sometimes cause chest discomfort as the fluid is drained and the lung expands. This is usually felt as a pulling sensation inside the chest but it can also be painful. If you experience this let your nurse know. The drainage may need to be stopped for a few minutes and restarted more slowly. You may also need to take some pain relief before starting the drainage. If the drainage is rapid you may also cough, again the drainage should be slowed down or stopped for a few minutes and restarted at a slower rate. It is not unusual to cough at the end of a drainage. This is a sign that most of the fluid has been drained.

Bathing and showering

The PleurX® catheter is covered with a waterproof dressing so you may shower as normal. It is best to do this on days that the PleurX® is being drained. You may take a bath sitting up but do not submerge the PleurX® catheter dressing. Swimming and going in hot tubs are not recommended.

What happens if the dressing comes off?

Reinforce the dressing with additional tape and inform your home care nurse.

What happens if the PleurX® catheter falls out?

This is not likely to happen because the catheter is tunneled under the skin and you should always have a dressing covering the catheter. If the catheter does become dislodged, cover the insertion site with a dry dressing and contact your doctor or home care nurse immediately. If the white cuff (see figure 1) is outside of the skin call your home care nurse or doctor immediately

How will I know when the PleurX® catheter can be removed?

Your home care nurse and doctor will monitor the amount of drainage over time. If the amount of fluid is minimal, eg 50mls - 100 mls per drainage, it may be possible to remove the PleurX® catheter. Your doctor will assess you and help you decide whether to remove the PleurX® catheter.

Useful Web-Sites

<http://www.carefusion.com/products-and-services/products-services-categories/interventional-specialties/pleurx.aspx>

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca> or email pchem@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **FA.200.P54**

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