

# Paracentesis

## Paracentesis

A paracentesis is a procedure done to remove extra fluid from your abdomen.

This procedure may be used to:

- find the cause of the extra fluid
- relieve pain
- check for cancer or an infection.

During the procedure, a small needle is used to drain extra fluid from your abdomen.

The procedure will take about 45 to 90 minutes. You will need to stay at the hospital for about 1 hour after the procedure.

## Benefits

Benefits of this procedure include:

- uses a small needle and is usually not painful
- has a short recovery time. You are able to get back to doing your normal activities quickly.

## Risks

Risks are rare. Possible risks include:

- bleeding or bruising
- infection
- damage to your liver or spleen
- punctured bowel or bladder.

## Before the Procedure

- Please arrange to have someone drive you home after the procedure.
- Tell your health care provider if you:
  - are taking any prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, herbal or natural products
  - have any allergies
  - have had bleeding or blood clotting problems
  - are pregnant.
- You will have lab work done, such as a blood test.
- You will need to sign a consent form.
- You will wear a hospital gown.
- An intravenous (IV) catheter will be inserted into your arm. It may be used during your procedure to give you medicines, blood, fluid or nutrition.
- You may be asked to go to the bathroom before the procedure.
- Follow any special instructions your health care provider gives you.

## During the Procedure

- You will lie on your back on an exam table.
- Your arms will be at your side.
- A nurse may help the radiologist (doctor who specializes in X-ray, MRI and ultrasound).

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- The radiologist will put gel on your abdomen.
- The radiologist may use ultrasound to find the safest pocket of fluid. He or she will use a marker to mark this area on your skin.
- The radiologist will clean your skin.
- A medicine (local anesthetic) is injected to numb the area.
- The radiologist will use a small needle to take out the extra fluid.

## After the Procedure

- You will stay at the hospital for about 1 hour after the procedure.
- You may have pain or slight bleeding at the needle insertion site.
- The radiologist may order albumin to be given through your IV if you have several liters of fluid removed. Albumin is given to people who have protein loss from the fluid removed.
- Call your health care provider's office for results in 3 to 5 days.
- You may return to your normal activities.

## When to Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you have any of the following:

- chills or a temperature of 100.4 F or higher
- redness, warmth, drainage or swelling at the needle insertion site
- severe pain in your abdomen
- increased pain or discomfort at the needle insertion site that does not go away
- dizziness or lightheadedness
- blood in your urine.