

# Care After Having a Heimlich Chest Tube Drainage System Inserted

## Your Procedure

In order to release the air trapped between your lungs and chest wall, your health care provider has placed a small tube through your skin into the space around your lung.

## What to Expect After Your Procedure

- It is normal to have a little soreness or tenderness at the tube insertion site. This should get better each day.
- You may notice a small amount of fluid within the tubing. The fluid may vary from clear to cherry red in color.
- Some discomfort around the drainage catheter is normal (especially when you take deep breaths).

## Activity

- Have someone drive you home. Do not drive for 24 hours.
- You should have someone stay with you or be available to help you for 12 hours after the procedure.
- Rest for the remainder of the day.
- Do not do any strenuous activity until after the chest tube is removed.
- Avoid any activity that causes pulling on or pain around the tube.
- Return to your normal activities as you feel able. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.

## Your Health Care Provider

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Food and Beverages

- Return to your normal diet. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- If you feel nauseated, drink clear liquids until you feel better.

## Pain Relief

- Return to your normal medicines (including pain medicine). Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.

## Hygiene

- You may take a sponge bath. Be sure to keep the area around the chest tube dry.
- You may take a shower or bath the day after the chest tube is removed.

## Clamping the Tube

- Turn the stopcock to the “off” position (to form a cross or “T”). This will stop the suction in the chest tube.

*(over)*

- If you tolerate clamping the tube for 2 hours, the tube is ready to come out. Call your health care provider. He or she will schedule a test to confirm the tube can be removed.

**Important:** If you become short of breath or develop chest pain while the suction is off, turn the stopcock back to the “on” position and call your health care provider.

## When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider or Radiology Department if you have:

- trouble breathing
- increased pain or discomfort around the tube insertion site
- drainage from around the drainage catheter, or bleeding around the drainage catheter
- chills or a temperature of 101 F or higher
- any questions or concerns.

## When To Call 911

Call 911 if you have:

- severe shortness of breath
- severe chest pain.
- severe chest tightness.

**Do not drive yourself to get medical help.**