

What is a Chest Tube?

After a lung biopsy air may leak into the space around the lung. If this happens the lung might collapse, causing difficulty to breath. The air must be removed from this space by putting a small plastic tube (drain) through the skin into the space. This is called a chest tube or chest drain.

The chest tube is then connected to a small device called a Pneumostat valve. It is a one-way valve that allows air and any fluid to leave your chest until the lung heals.

What to expect after your procedure:

When it is time for you to go home, you will be given a requisition for a chest x-ray.

This x-ray will need to be done the next morning. The next morning, bring the requisition and arrive at Central Registration. The registration clerk will sign you in and send you to Diagnostic Imaging to have your x-ray.

The technologist will have you change into a hospital gown. He/she will clamp your chest tube and take the x-ray. The Interventional Radiologist (specialist who did your biopsy) will be informed and he will look at your x-ray. If he is content with the x-ray, he will remove the chest tube. If not, and he would like it to remain in place another day, you will receive a requisition for another x-ray the next day and the same process will take place or you may be referred to your Respiriologist or the LDAP clinic for further follow up.

What to expect at home with the chest tube:

Care of your chest tube:

- You may shower with a chest tube in but do not submerge the tube or valve in water. Try to keep the dressing dry.
- No tub baths, hot tubs or swimming.
- It is very important to take several deep breaths each hour you are awake to expand your lungs.
- For discomfort, you can take acetaminophen tablets such as plain Tylenol®.

If the chest tube falls out, is pulled out:

- Do not try to replace the tube yourself.
- Cover the small hole right away with a bandage or gauze pad and tape.

While at home there may be blood stained fluid in the drainage container. This is often expected.

If you have any **chest pain, or shortness of breath** report to the nearest emergency department.

Further Information

Please contact your referring physician or Niagara Health Interventional Radiologist 905-378-4647