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Ultrasound Guided Drainage of Abdominal Fluid (Paracentesis)

Radiology

A guide for patients and carers

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The aim of this leaflet is to provide information to patients who require an abdominal drain to relieve symptoms of build-up of fluid within the abdomen. It is not meant to replace discussions between you and your doctor, but can act as a starting point for you. If you have any questions about the procedure, please ask the doctor who has referred you or the Imaging Department at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre (CCC).

Why do I need an abdominal drain?

It is necessary for you to have an abdominal drain inserted to relieve symptoms caused by the excess fluid within your abdomen. Sometimes, this can be done by taking drugs called diuretics. However, this is not always possible because of side-effects, the drugs stop working, or the drugs may take a few weeks to work. The quickest way to remove the fluid is to drain the fluid through a plastic tube inserted into the abdomen (this is called paracentesis).

What does an abdominal drain involve?

You will be an inpatient in the hospital as a day case. You will have had some blood tests performed beforehand to check that you do not have an increased risk of bleeding. A specially trained team, led by an interventional radiologist within the imaging department,

will carry out your procedure. Interventional radiologists have special expertise in reading images and using imaging to guide catheters and wires to aid diagnosis and treatment.

When in the imaging department:

- You will lie on a table, and we will perform an ultrasound to find the safest place to insert the needle
 - We will rub gel on your skin which helps to get good pictures for the exam
 - We will gently move the ultrasound equipment over your skin, which will send sound waves through your body. You will not feel or hear the sound waves. They will make pictures on the ultrasound machine
- Next, we clean the skin and numb with some medicine via a needle. You may feel a slight burning sensation as the skin becomes numb
- While performing ultrasound the doctor will gently insert the fine catheter; you may feel some pain or pressure, this only lasts for a short time
- A drainage bag will be attached to the catheter and the fluid drains into the bag
- A dressing will be applied to the area of the catheter to keep it in place



You will then go back to the ward where your blood pressure and pulse measurements will be regularly monitored and the volume of drained fluid recorded. Once the required amount of fluid has been drained or the drainage has slowed to a minimum, the catheter will be removed. The drain will stay in for up to six hours before it is removed. A dressing will be placed over the area and should remain in place for 48 hours, and be kept as dry as possible.

Can there be any complications or risks?

Any procedure does carry a small risk of complications and side effects. Having an abdominal drain is a safe procedure with a very small rate of significant side effects. The most common side effect is a feeling of tiredness after the procedure and some patients experience a slight increase in their abdominal pain. Less common complications may include some leakage of fluid from the drain site for up to 72 hours after the procedure. Very occasionally, patients get bleeding from the drain site, or patients may develop a low blood pressure. Very rare complications can include introduction of infection into the abdominal cavity or damage to one of the intra-abdominal organs (e.g. gut, liver, spleen). If you have any concerns about complications after you have been discharged, you should contact **The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre Hotline on 0800 169 5555.**

How do I prepare for the procedure?

You will be asked not to eat for four hours before the procedure, although you may still drink clear fluids such as water. You should be ideally accompanied home (but not on public transport) in case you have any pain or discomfort after the procedure.

If you are on Heparin/Warfarin/Aspirin please ring your cancer doctor's secretary, as you will need special instructions before you come in for the procedure.

General information

Most of your questions should have been answered by this leaflet but this is only a starting point for discussions with your cancer health care team. If you have any questions or concerns you should contact Sulby Ward on 0151 556 5013. Share the information contained within this leaflet with your partner and family (if you wish) so they can be of help and support. There may be information they need to know, especially if they are taking care of you following this examination.



How we produce our information

All of our leaflets are produced by staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and this information is not sponsored or influenced in any way. Every effort is made to ensure that the information included in this leaflet is accurate and complete and we hope that it will add to any professional advice you have had. All our leaflets are evidence based where appropriate and they are regularly reviewed and updated. If you are concerned about your health in any way, you should consult your healthcare team.

We rely on a number of sources to gather evidence for our information. All of our information is in line with accepted national or international guidelines where possible. Where no guidelines exist, we rely on other reliable sources such as systematic reviews, published clinical trials data or a consensus review of experts. We also use medical textbooks, journals and government publications.

References for this leaflet can be obtained by telephoning 0151 556 5570.

If you need this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or different language, please call 0151 556 5570.

If you have a comment, concern, compliment or complaint, please call 0151 556 5203.

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