

LEAVING HOSPITAL AFTER A CHEST DRAIN

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

What do I do when I get home?

You are still likely to have pain when you are discharged from hospital. This should improve over the next 6 weeks.

Keep the risk of developing a pneumonia low by:

- Continuing with your deep breathing exercises.
- Taking painkillers regularly until you are able to take deep breaths without discomfort.
- Complete antibiotics if you have been prescribed them.
- Avoiding smoking.
- Avoid constipation that can occur when you are on some types of painkillers by drinking plenty of fluids, eating fruit and using a laxative if needed.

If you develop increasing shortness of breath, fever, cough or yellow/green phlegm seek medical advice from your GP or if your symptoms are severe, from the Emergency Department.

Watch for signs of wound infection:

- Spreading redness around the wound
- Increasing pain at the wound site
- Oozing or dirty dressing.

Keep your stitches dry. Seek medical advice from your GP or out of hours centre if you feel you may have a wound infection.

In most cases the stitches in your wound will need removing around 10 days after they were put in. The practice nurse at your GP surgery can do this. You will have a scar that will fade over the next 12-18months, but is unlikely to disappear completely.

Special Advice on Flying and Diving.

Once you have had a chest drain in, the risk of your lung collapsing again is increased if you fly in an aeroplane. This increased risk lasts for around a year.

The most recent advice is that this risk is quite small and most airlines will allow you to fly within two weeks of an x-ray confirming that your lung is re-inflated. If you do plan a flight in the six weeks following your injury it would be sensible to check with the airline.

You should not fly in an unpressurised aeroplane or SCUBA dive unless you have been assessed as fit to do so by a doctor with a special interest in chest medicine.

What about driving?

You will need to use your judgement to decide whether your pain has settled enough to keep control of your vehicle in an emergency. If you have any concerns it would be sensible to seek advice from your insurance company.

Will I need to come back to hospital?

In most cases you will have discussed your need for an out patient review with the doctor at the time of discharge. If you haven't been given a review appointment and feel that you need one please contact the Emergency Department and you can discuss your concerns.

Useful websites

www.nhs.uk

www.chsft.nhs.uk

Contact details

This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not yet be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.

Information is based on that available on www.patient.co.uk.

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