

Patient information: Aftercare of drains placed to treat a lung biopsy related pneumothorax

What is a post biopsy pneumothorax (lung collapse)?

A common complication of lung biopsies is when air leaks out of the hole made in the lung into the gap between the lung and chest wall. This can lead to the lung deflating (collapsing) which will make you feel breathless.

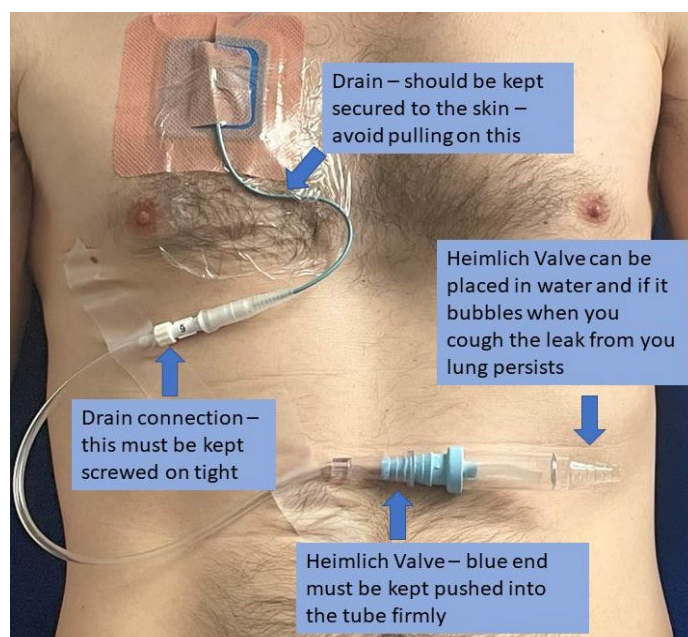
The radiologist has decided you need a chest drain to remove the leaked air. This chest drain allows air out of your chest but not back in using a one-way valve.

How do I care for this chest drain?

The chest drain is securely held in place but it could come out if pulled hard. Ensure the drain is kept inside your clothes and tape it to your skin out of the way, to ensure it is not pulled.

If you experience mild pain or discomfort at the drain site and around the chest take simple painkillers.

Ideally avoid showering as this could loosen the dressings. Do not immerse the whole drain under water. You can test if your lung is still leaking air by placing just the end tip of the Heimlich valve in a cup of water and if there are bubbles when you cough there is still an air leak. This means the drain needs to stay in longer.



How long will I need it for?

Usually the pin-hole made in the lung for your biopsy heals within 24-48hrs but sometimes this can take several days. An appointment has been made for you to attend a clinic to have the drain reassessed and potentially removed.

Go to the Outpatient Imaging department (xray) to have a chest xray before going to AREA 3 Reception 3 Outpatients department clinic for

When should I seek help?

If the connectors become undone or loose, you should tighten them back up or push them back in exactly as they were before (see image). It is important that the BLUE end of the valve at the end is towards you and the clear end away from you (see image).

You should immediately go to A&E (ideally at this hospital or your local one) if you develop severe chest pain or breathlessness or if the tube falls out. Explain you had a lung biopsy and needed a drain afterwards.

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.