



Thoracic Surgery Drain Clinic

Outpatient drain clinic

Appointment date..... Time

Chest X-ray before attendance Yes / No

What is drain clinic?

Drain clinic is a thoracic surgery team led outpatient clinic for patients who have been discharged home with a chest drain. This is to see how much fluid has drained out and if any air is still leaking from the chest. We also look at the drain wound (site) and stitches. This is to decide whether the drain can be removed or not.

This often involves you having a chest X-ray in order to check the progress of the lung and drain. If you need an X-ray, you will be asked to attend the radiology department before arriving for your appointment.

Following your chest X-ray please make your way to the outpatient clinic. You will be told where to go.

Please do not worry if you are late due to having an X-ray. We are aware that you may have to wait for some time for your X-ray to be performed.

What will happen at drain clinic?

You will be assessed by a member of the thoracic surgical team.

The chest X-ray and your drain will be looked at and a decision made to either remove the drain or keep it and return to drain clinic the following week. If you are having your drain removed you will often need a second chest X-ray after the procedure to check the lung remains inflated.

Please be aware that due to the need for X-rays and procedures to remove the drain, there may be a lengthy wait. You should plan to be at hospital for at least two hours.

Drain removal

You will be asked to lie on your side and the drain will be removed from the other side of your chest.

Dressings will be removed and the area cleaned. This can sting as the skin often becomes red and sore (inflamed) in the area where the drain is inserted.

You will be taught a breathing exercise to use while the drain is being pulled out. You may be asked to practice this breathing exercise a couple of times before the actual drain removal.

The stitch holding the drain in place will be cut and then you will be told to carry out the breathing exercise.

Information for Patients

You may feel a tugging or sliding sensation as the drain tube is pulled out. The drain stitches will then be pulled closed to seal the hole where the drain was inserted. This can sting because of soreness in the skin. We recommend that you take some pain relief as prescribed before coming to clinic.

Sometimes we need to insert a further stitch to seal the hole. You will be given local anaesthetic for this procedure to make the area numb. This reduces the feeling to this area and the sensation of pain.

After drain removal

You may need to have another chest X-ray after the removal procedure. Once a member of staff has looked at this and all is well, you can go home.

In the rare event that your lung has deflated, another chest drain may need to be inserted. The team will discuss this with you if this happens.

Drain stitches will not dissolve so you will need to contact your GP practice to arrange removal 5 to 7 days after the drain was removed.

What to bring with you

- Bring your discharge letter and your notes of how much fluid has drained
- Bring your own pain relief with you and take some pain relief (as prescribed) before you come to clinic
- Bring something to eat and drink

Please let us know if you need help with mobility before coming to drain clinic so that we can make suitable arrangements.

Contact Details

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham

Ward 513, 07:00 to 20:00 hours.

Telephone: 0121 371 2000

Advanced Clinical Practitioners via the Thoracic Surgery Department Secretaries

08:00 to 17:00 hours.

Telephone: 0121 371 2129

Thoracic Surgery

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston Birmingham, B15 2GW

Telephone: 0121 371 2000

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.