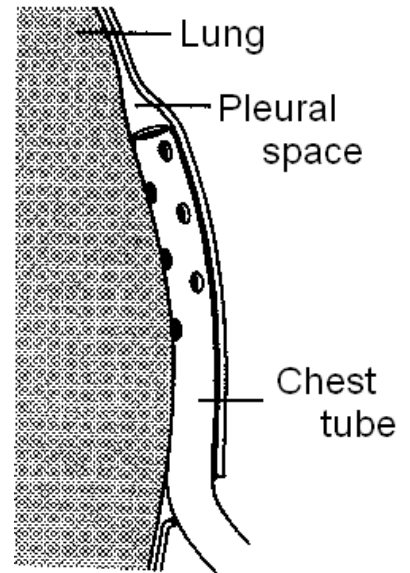


Chest Tubes

Chest tubes are put in to remove fluid or air from your chest cavity. Normally there is only a very small amount of fluid in the cavity between your chest wall and your lungs. This cavity is called the pleural space. Fluid or air may collect in the chest cavity:

- During surgery on the heart or lung
- When a lung collapses
- With some diseases

Fluid and air must be taken out of the chest cavity so that you can expand your lungs, and breathe easily. If you are having heart or lung surgery, the chest tubes will be put in during surgery. If you are not having surgery and need a chest tube, the tube is put in while you are in your room.



Procedure

If you have a chest tube put in while you are in your room, the procedure is done as follows:

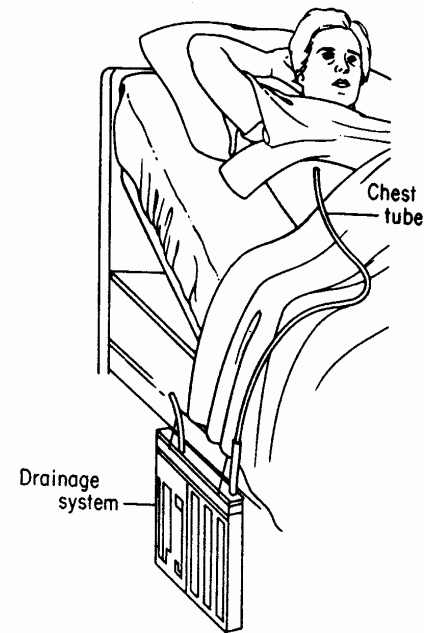
- You will be awake during the procedure; however, you may be given some medicine to help you relax and control pain.
- The doctor may ask you to lie on your side.
- The area where the tube is put in is cleansed.

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Learn more about your health care.

- The doctor will numb that area of the chest. This will sting, but will only last a few moments.
- A small incision (cut) will be made in the numbed area. The tube is put in through this incision.
- The chest tube is stitched to the skin to keep it in place.
- A dressing is put over the incision. The dressing is changed when needed.

The chest tube connects to a container that hangs on the bed or sits on the floor. The drainage container may be attached to suction. The suction helps take the fluid and air out of your chest cavity.



While the chest tube is in:

- Ask your nurse for pain medicine if you need it. Chest tubes may be uncomfortable.
- Move your arm to help keep your arm from feeling stiff and sore.
- Take deep breaths to help expand your lungs as the fluid and air is taken out by the chest tube. Your nurse will remind you to take deep breaths.
- Use the incentive spirometer every 1 to 2 hours while awake.
- You will be able to get out of bed with the chest tube in place. Your nurse will help you move and show you what to do or not to do so you will move about safely.

Removing Your Chest Tube

The chest tube will be taken out when no more fluid or air needs to be removed from your chest cavity. For a few days, you will need to have a dressing over the place where the chest tube was put in. This dressing needs to be sealed with tape on all sides.

Going Home with Your Chest Tube

If you go home with your chest tube, it will be connected to a small drainage system. You will be taught how to take care of this drain by your nurse and given written information in your discharge instructions.

- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**