

# Paracentesis

Paracentesis is a procedure to drain excess fluid in the abdomen between the lining of the abdominal wall and the organs such as the liver, gallbladder, spleen and stomach. A small amount of fluid (peritoneal fluid) is always present in the abdomen. When this fluid builds up, it is called ascites. Large amounts of extra fluid in the abdomen can cause your abdomen to feel tight and painful. It may also cause shortness of breath. The build-up may be caused by:

- › Liver disease
- › Infection
- › Inflammation
- › Injury
- › Tumor

Paracentesis helps to:

- › Relieve pain and shortness of breath caused by the build-up of fluid
- › Find the cause of the build-up of fluid

The procedure takes about 30 minutes to 1 hour. You may have it done as an outpatient in the Interventional Radiology (IR) Department. If you are in the hospital, it may also be done in your room. A physician, a physician assistant (PA) or an advanced practice nurse (APN) will do the paracentesis.

If you have any questions,  
please talk with your  
physician or nurse.

## Before the procedure

### Outpatients

Come to the 4th Floor of Feinberg Pavilion, 251 East Huron Street, 1 hour before your procedure. Check in with the receptionist. Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions. For a discounted rate, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the Customer Service desk on the 1st or 2nd floor of Feinberg and Galter pavilions.

When you arrive at the IR Department, a staff member will bring you and 1 family member to the prep and recovery area. They will review your health history, medications and allergies.

Tell your physician:

- › If you have allergies
- › If you take prescription, over-the-counter or herbal medications
- › If you take blood-thinning medications or have bleeding problems
- › If you are or may be pregnant

You may need blood tests to check your blood clotting level. You will have an ultrasound to locate the area of fluid to be drained.


### All patients

After reviewing the procedure and answering your questions, we will ask you to sign a written consent form.

## During the procedure

Your nurse or technologist will help position you on an exam table. It is important to stay still during the procedure.

The clinician will clean the area on your abdomen where they will insert the needle. The special soap they use may feel cold. They will inject an anesthetic (numbing medication) into the area. This will sting for a few seconds. Once the area feels numb, they will insert the needle into your abdomen. You may feel pressure as the needle goes in. Then, they will connect the needle to a syringe or tube attached to a collection bag.



If they remove a large amount of fluid, you may feel light-headed. They will give you fluids through an IV (into the vein) line to prevent this.

## After the procedure

Tell the nurse if you feel:

- › Dizzy or light-headed
- › Sharp pain in your abdomen

You will have a bandage over the puncture site on your abdomen. Small amounts of clear fluid may leak out from the site over the next 1 to 2 days.

The clinician may send the fluid to the lab for testing. It can take a few days to have results. Your primary care physician will discuss a treatment plan based on the results of the testing.

## Outpatients

After going home, you may resume your normal diet and activities. You may remove your bandage and shower after 24 hours. Please do not soak in a bathtub, hot tub or swimming pool for 5 days after the procedure.

## Call your physician right away if you have any of the following:

- › Temperature more than 100 degrees F
- › Severe abdominal pain
- › Increased redness or tenderness at the needle site
- › Blood in your urine
- › Bleeding or increased drainage from the needle site

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