



Chest Drain / Pneumothorax Info. - discharge from CDU Cork Emergency Medicine



Why was the chest drain inserted?

You were diagnosed with condition called pneumothorax/ haemothorax. What this means is that air/ blood/ both were accumulating within your chest cavity between two layers of thin tissue called the pleura. The chest drain may have been inserted in order to remove the air/blood. Sometimes a drain is not required. Two most common reasons for this condition are: trauma (due to broken ribs) or spontaneous (without any specific reason).

What's next?

You are being discharged from the Clinical Decision Unit, this means that your condition is considered stable. You are now safe to return home. Please be aware that a small amount of the air could remain trapped between layers of pleura, this sometimes takes couple to weeks to be reabsorbed back into your body. Therefore, you must be aware of red flag symptoms:

- Worsening shortness of breath
- Worsening cough
- Worsening sharp chest pain on inspiration
- Blue discoloration to lips and fingers
- Faster breathing
- Faster pulse

If any of those symptoms are present, please present back to the Emergency Department. Above symptoms could mean your pneumothorax has reaccumulated.

If you are concerned, please contact the Emergency Department you first attended:

Mercy University Hospital
(021) 230 5011

M-UCC at (St. Mary's Health Campus)
(021) 4926900

CUH
(021) 4920200

Local Injury Unit Mallow General Hospital
(022) 58506

Bantry General Hospital
(027) 52900



If you are having no symptoms we will ask you to reattend Clinical Decision Unit on .../...../..... at 10:30 am. We will repeat the x-ray of your chest to ensure that pneumothorax is fully resolved.

Why do I need to attend follow-up?

You need to be aware that until your pneumothorax is completely resolved **you must not travel by air**. Before you can travel by air again we must ensure complete resolution of the condition.

What can I do to improve my respiratory health?

We recommend you stop smoking if you currently do. If you are interested, please ask your nurse for contact details to smoking cessation services in CUH.

I am a deep-sea diver; how does this affect me?

Unfortunately, we recommend you never scuba dive again unless you undergo a surgical procedure to repair the pneumothorax. If you were to sustain another episode while under water the consequences could be fatal.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask prior to your discharge.

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