



CONSUMER INFORMATION

Pleural drains in adults: A consensus guideline

Respiratory Network

What is a pleural drain?

A pleural drain (also called a chest drain) is a sterile plastic tube that can be inserted to remove air or fluids, such as blood, lymph or pus that have accumulated in the space between the inside of the chest wall and the lung.

Normally this 'pleural' space only contains a small amount of lubricant. When air or fluid builds up in this pleural space it leads to crowding or collapse of the lung. This air or fluid may occur as the result of surgery, an illness, or a serious injury to the chest.

A person may need a chest drain inserted if they have a pneumothorax (air outside the lung), a pleural effusion (fluid outside the lung), an empyema (pus outside the lung) or haemothorax (blood outside the lung).

Why would I need a pleural drain?

This procedure can be life-saving in an emergency situation or used to relieve symptoms in people with an illness or cancer.

Who should insert a pleural drain?

The insertion of a pleural drain and care of a person who has a pleural drain in place should be provided in specific areas within hospitals where medical and nursing staff with the appropriate experience and skills in pleural drains are available.

PLEURAL DRAINS IN ADULTS: A CONSENSUS GUIDELINE

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) has developed the *Pleural Drains in Adults – A Consensus Guideline* to describe an agreed standard of good care for adults who require a pleural drain within NSW public hospitals.

Where can I find out more?

For more information about the Pleural Drains in Adults – A Consensus Guideline contact the [ACI Respiratory Network](#).

The British Thoracic Society has produced a more detailed consumer information sheet: [Patient Information Leaflet - Chest Drain Insertion](#).

CONTACT

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