

Paracentesis

What is Paracentesis?

Ascites is the buildup of excess fluid in your abdominal space (peritoneal cavity). Infection, inflammation, injury, or diseases such as cirrhosis or cancer can cause ascites. Paracentesis removes this excess fluid. After the procedure, a sample of the fluid is sent to the laboratory for analysis.

Reasons to have paracentesis:

- Find out why fluid is building up in the belly.
- Diagnose an infection in the peritoneal cavity.
- Check for types of cancer.
- Check for damage after a belly injury.
- To remove large amounts of fluid that are causing you pain, making it difficult for you to breath normally, or causing problems with how your kidneys or intestines are working.

How Do I Prepare?

Some over-the-counter and prescription medications can interfere with normal blood clotting and increase the risk of bleeding. Follow the guidelines in the chart on when to stop taking certain medicines, vitamins, and supplements.

If your doctor gives you different instructions, always follow your doctor's instructions.

7 days (1 week) before the procedure, stop taking aspirin, herbal supplements, garlic tablets, and vitamins

5 days before the procedure, stop taking warfarin (Coumadin® or Jantoven®) and clopidogrel (Plavix®)

3 days before the procedure, stop taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs):

ibuprofen (Advil®/ Motrin®)	meloxicam (Mobic®)
naproxen (Aleve®/Anaprox®)	oxaprozin (Daypro®)
piroxicam (Feldene®)	sulindac (Clinorial®)
etodolac (Lodine®)	diclofenac (Voltaren®)
piroxicam (Feldene®)	diflunisal
ketoprofen	

1 day (24 hours) before your procedure, stop taking: enoxaparin (Lovenox®)

If you take any medications to treat or prevent blood clots, talk to your doctor about when, or if, you should stop taking your medication before surgery. These medications include:

apixaban (Eliquis®)	prasugrel (Effient®)
cilostazol (Pletal®)	Rivaroxaban (Xarelto®)
dabigatran (Pradaxa®)	ticagrelor (Brilinta®)
dalteparin (Fragmin®)	ticlopidine (Ticlid®)
eptifibatide (Integrilin®)	tinzaparin (Innohep®)
fondaparinux (Arixtra®)	tirofiban (Aggrastat®)
lepirudin (Refludan®)	

On the day before your procedure:

- If you have diabetes and take insulin, talk to your primary doctor about how to take your insulin on the day of the surgery.
- Take all other medications as prescribed.
- There are no restrictions on eating.

What Happens During Paracentesis?

- Paracentesis is done in Radiology with ultrasound guidance, or at the bedside.
- You will be asked to urinate before the procedure to empty your bladder.
- You might have the procedure sitting up or lying on your side but most often, you are lying on your back. You might be asked to change position during the procedure.
- The place on your belly where the needle will be inserted is cleaned to make it sterile.
- A numbing substance (local anesthetic) is injected into the cleaned site.
- Once the area is numb, a longer needle, with a plastic tube over it, is inserted into your abdomen. The needle is removed and the tube is left in place and attached to a vacuum bottle, which collects the fluid. Once the fluid stops draining, the tube is removed.
- When the procedure is complete, a small dressing or a bandage will be placed over the site, and you will be helped to a comfortable position.
- We will monitor your blood pressure and breathing to make sure there are no complications.
- Paracentesis does not hurt, but you may feel some discomfort. Tell your doctor if you are feeling uncomfortable.

After the Procedure

- You may eat and drink immediately after the procedure. When your vital signs are normal, you can go home.
- There may be mild tenderness and swelling at the paracentesis site.
- We recommend you have someone drive you home as low blood pressure may occur (and cause dizziness) even after you have left the hospital.

Are There Instructions to Follow at Home?

There is no special care needed after paracentesis, but these few tips can help you feel better:

- **Rehydrate:** Drink a lot of fluid afterwards, especially if a large amount of fluid was removed. Drinking extra fluids, such as water, can help prevent your blood pressure from dropping, which could make you feel dizzy or faint.
- **Replace electrolytes and proteins:** Drinking Gatorade®, Boost®, Ensure®, etc. will help replace the proteins and electrolytes (sodium, potassium, chloride, bicarbonate) that were lost when the ascites was drained.
- **Small leaks at injection site:** Sometimes, a small amount of fluid may leak from the site where the needle was inserted. If this happens, you should lie on your back with the puncture site raised slightly until the leaking has stopped.

When Should I Call my Doctor?

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- **fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher**
- abdominal pain
- swelling
- an increase in drainage or bleeding from the site
- lightheadedness