

Pleural Catheter Drainage Guidelines

At some point, a noticeably smaller volume of fluid may flow through your catheter. Drainage may even stop. This is **usually** a good sign that means:

- The space around your lung has closed.
- Fluid will no longer build up in your chest.

However, a noticeably smaller volume of fluid may also be a sign that your catheter has become blocked and needs to be replaced. Your symptoms are important. Certain changes may tell you whether drainage has stopped:

- Because treatment was successful, or
- Your shortness of breath has returned or worsened.

Your catheter may be blocked if:

- You can only drain small amounts of fluid, and
- Your shortness of breath has returned or worsened. Call your doctor for an appointment as soon as possible.

The space around your lungs has probably closed if:

- The amount of fluid drained falls below 15 cc (about a tablespoon), and
- You do not feel very short of breath

If the amount of fluid falls below 15 cc, wait 2 days before draining again. If the amount of fluid is still less than 15 cc and your shortness of breath has not gotten worse, wait another 2 days before draining. If on this third attempt the volume is still less than 15 cc call your doctor for an appointment within the next 7 days. Your doctor will re-evaluate your plan of care and may remove your catheter at this time.

If the volume of fluid goes back up on your second or third drainage, continue with regular treatments until the volume is less than 15 cc on 3 separate attempts at drainage (each 2 days apart), without an increase in shortness of breath.

Call you doctor for an appointment within the next 7 days.