



London Health Sciences Centre
Trauma Program

Chest Tubes in Trauma

Patient Education

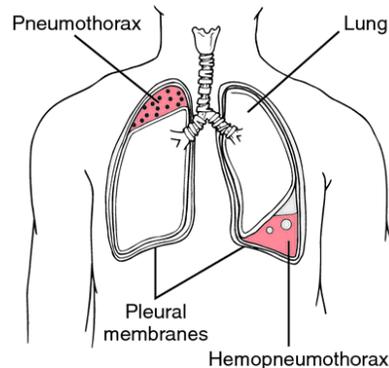
If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the Trauma Program at 519-667-6795.



London Health Sciences Centre

Chest Injury

Trauma to your chest can cause air (pneumothorax) or blood (hemothorax) to develop between your chest wall and your lung. Leaving the air or blood within your chest can make it difficult to breathe. A chest tube(s) was placed to remove the blood or air from your chest.



After Chest Tube Removal

Your old chest tube site(s) will be partially closed with sutures and covered with a dressing. You may remove the dressing in 3 days and cover the site with a large bandaid or small gauze. The stitch(es) should be removed in 7-14 days by your family doctor or at the Trauma clinic follow up. There should be no drainage from the chest tube site. You do not require a visit from a nurse at your home to monitor the old chest tube site or change the dressing. At your follow up appointment a chest xray will occur to reassess how your lungs are doing since discharge from hospital.

If you develop any of the following at the chest tube site, please call the Trauma program or see your doctor:

- Increased redness or swelling
- Worsening pain
- Foul odour
- Drainage from the wound

Chest Tube Monitoring in Hospital

While you are in hospital, your medical team will monitor the amount of blood or fluid coming out of your chest tube, and perform daily chest x-rays to monitor for any remaining air between your lung and chest wall, and that the chest tube is staying in the correct place. Once the air has resolved, and the fluid or blood coming from your chest tube is greatly reduced, your chest tube will be removed. There is a chance that that the air or blood/fluid could redevelop and another tube needs to be put back in. You should be practicing deep breathing and coughing, sitting in the chair for each meal, and walking at minimum three times a day to help heal the injury to your lung and prevent pneumonia.

Discharged Home

Important reminders for while you are home:

- Regular activity will promote your recovery. Short walks and sitting up in the chair are important. Pace yourself, and alternate activity with rest.
- Regular deep breathing and coughing will expand your lungs and aid in preventing pneumonia.
- Showering is ok, but no submerging yourself in water (bath, hot tub, swimming pool) until your wounds are healed.
- Do not drive a car while you are still in discomfort and you are under the influence of pain medication.