

About Your Inpatient Paracentesis

A paracentesis is a procedure used to remove fluid from the abdominal cavity (the space between the bowels and the wall of the abdomen). This fluid is called ascites.

Why is a paracentesis done?

Fluid is removed from the abdomen to:

- send to a lab to find out the cause of the fluid build-up. Some causes are:
 - infection
 - bleeding
 - cancer
 - liver disease.
- lower the pressure in the abdomen. This can help lower pain and make breathing easier.

What happens during a paracentesis?

A paracentesis is usually a bedside procedure.

- The skin on the abdomen is cleaned.
- A medicine to numb the area is put into the skin where the needle goes in.
- The doctor or nurse practitioner will gently guide a small needle through the skin and into the space where the extra fluid is.
- A sample of fluid will be drawn out and sent to the lab.

- If more fluid needs to be removed, the needle is connected to tubing and a drainage bottle.
- After the fluid is removed, the needle is taken out and a bandage is placed over the needle site. Fluid may leak out from this needle site. The bandage will be changed as needed.

Fluid may continue to build up in the abdominal cavity. How quickly the fluid collects again depends on the patient's illness. A paracentesis may need to be done more than once for a patient.

