



## Information for patients, relatives and carers

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# Pneumothorax

You have been diagnosed as having a pneumothorax ('collapsed lung'). Normally the outer surface of the lung and the lining of the chest wall are in close contact. Occasionally air can leak into this space, pushing the lung away from the chest wall, and causing a pneumothorax.

If the pneumothorax is small you may not need any active treatment as it will get better by itself. You will be discharged and asked to re-attend for another chest x-ray in two weeks' time.

Larger pneumothoraces are treated by aspiration (sucking the air out), using a needle and syringe. The size of the pneumothorax is then checked again on chest x-ray. If the pneumothorax has reduced sufficiently you will be discharged and asked to attend for another chest x-ray two weeks later. If this is a recurrent problem, we will send a referral to the respiratory physicians, who will send you a clinic appointment.

### Following a pneumothorax:

- You can return to work and physical activity once your symptoms have resolved
- You should stop smoking to reduce your risk of a recurrence
- Air travel should be avoided until the pneumothorax has completely resolved on x-ray. Airlines advise a further week before flying, after full resolution, although it would be advisable to check with individual airlines
- Do not go to remote places where medical care is limited
- You should never scuba dive (unless you have had definitive surgery)

Following your discharge, if you experience increasing pain and/or breathlessness, you should seek medical help urgently.

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① If you have further concerns about your condition, please contact your GP. If you are not sure what to do, call 111 or get help from 111 online: <https://111.nhs.uk/> [When to use NHS 111 - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk)

An answer phone is available out of hours.

### **Leaflets in alternative languages or formats**

If you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print, Easy Read or audio, please ask the staff who are looking after you.

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