

# Tunnelled peritoneal drainage catheter insertion for refractory ascites in cirrhosis

Information for the public

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There is not enough evidence about how well this procedure works or how safe it is. This type of procedure can cause complications. So, it can only be done with special arrangements. This means you will have regular appointments afterwards to check how well it is working or if it has caused problems.

Long-term liver scarring (cirrhosis) can cause fluid to build up (ascites) in the abdomen, causing difficulty in breathing, nausea, bloating, acid reflux, abdominal pain, poor appetite and infection. The fluid can be drained in hospital (peritoneal drainage) with a temporary drainage tube (catheter) to help relieve the symptoms, but the fluid recurs (refractory). So, drainage needs to be repeated every 1 to 2 weeks. This may cause pain and infection.

In this procedure, with a local anaesthetic (or occasionally under sedation or a general anaesthetic) a catheter is inserted (tunnelled) under the skin into the abdomen. Excess fluid can then be drained when needed, at home or in community care into a bottle or a bag. In between times, the catheter is capped and covered with a clean dressing. The aim is to reduce the need for hospital admissions and improve quality of life.

The [NHS website](#) may have information on your condition and treatment options.

## Is this procedure right for me?

You should be included in [making decisions about your care](#).

Your healthcare professionals should explain the risks and benefits of this procedure and how it is done. They should discuss your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. They should offer you more information about the procedure. Your family or carers can be involved if you want or need them to be.

You will be asked to decide whether you agree (consent) to have the procedure. Find out more about [giving consent to treatment on the NHS website](#).

## Some questions to think about

- How many appointments will I need?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- Will I have to stay in hospital?
- What happens if it does not work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I do not want the procedure?
- Are other treatments available?

## Information and support

- [NICE's information on HealthTech guidance](#) explains what HealthTech is and how we assess it.
- [NICE's information on HealthTech recommendations](#) explains what special arrangements are.

This organisation can give you advice and support: [British Liver Trust](#), 0800 652 7330.

You can also get support from your local [Healthwatch](#).

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