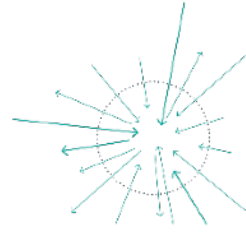




west midlands
ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCE NETWORK



Accelerated
Access
Collaborative

Information about pneumothorax

For patients with a collapsed lung

We say pneumothorax
like this:
“New - mo - thor - axe”



**Easy
Read**



Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some hard information. It may not include all of the information but will tell you about the important parts.



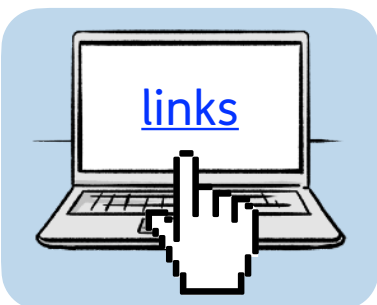
This Easy Read information uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker.



These are words that some people will find hard. When you see a bold word, we will explain it in the next sentence.



[Blue and underlined](#) words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

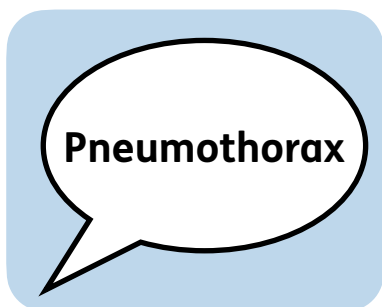
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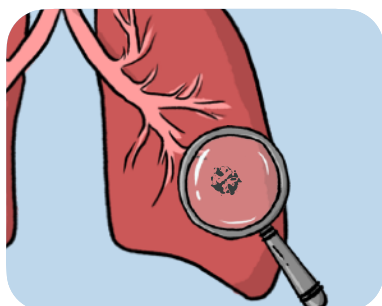
About this booklet



This booklet is for patients with a collapsed lung caused by a **pneumothorax**.

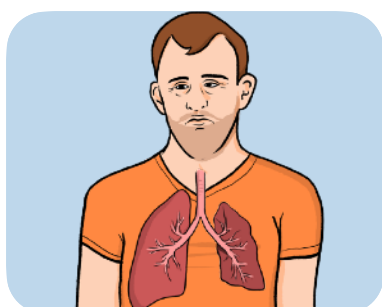


We say **pneumothorax** like this:
“New - mo - thor - axe”



A **pneumothorax** is when air escapes from your lung and gets trapped in your chest.

The air escapes through a small tear or hole in your lung.

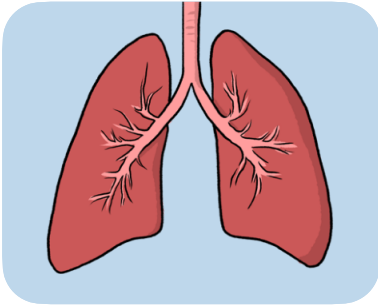


It can make your lung collapse a little bit, or fully collapse like a popped balloon.

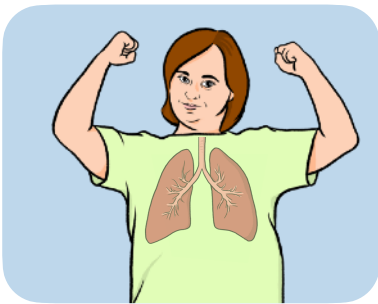


This booklet will tell you more about pneumothorax and how it can be treated.

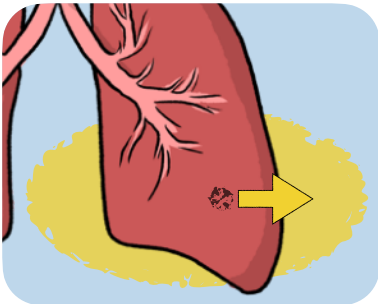
A pneumothorax



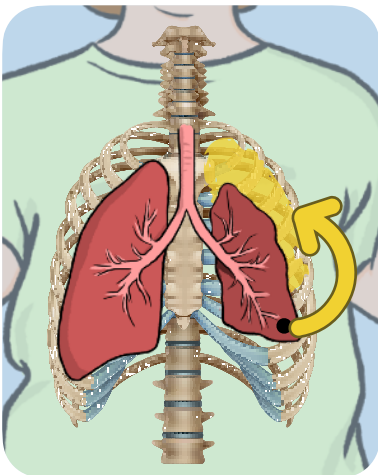
Your 2 lungs are in your chest. They fill with air when you breathe in.



They take a gas called oxygen from the air into your blood. You need oxygen to live.



Sometimes a tear or hole may appear in the lining of your lung.



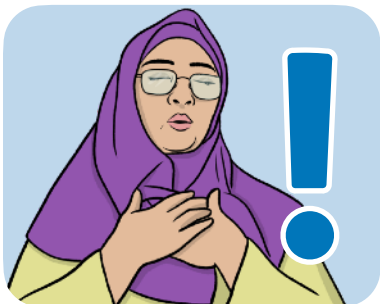
Air escapes through the hole and gets trapped in your chest, in the space between your lung and your ribs.

This is a pneumothorax.

Why does it happen?



A pneumothorax can happen to anyone.

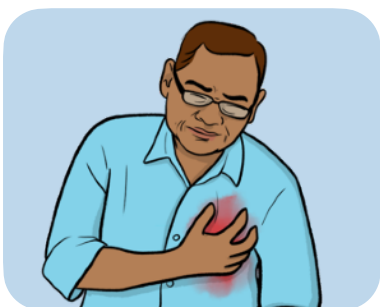


It can happen to people younger than 50 years old with no health problems to do with their lungs.



It can happen to people that do have other health problems to do with their lungs.

This is usually older people over the age of 50.



It can also happen to people because of an accident or chest injury.

A pneumothorax is more likely to happen to:



- Tall people.



- People who have a parent or parents that have had a pneumothorax.



- People who smoke.



There is some information about help to stop smoking at the back of this booklet.

What does it feel like?



A pneumothorax can be painful, but it is not dangerous.



Your chest or back may feel tight.



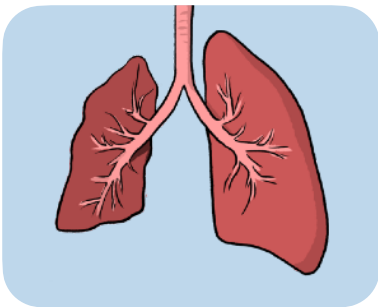
You may get a 'stabbing' pain in your chest or back.



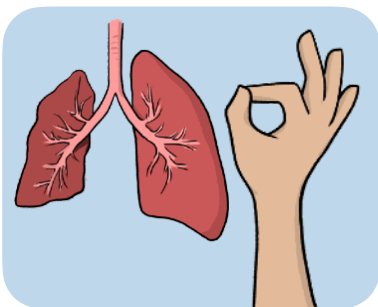
It may be a mild pain or a very strong pain.



You may find it hard to breathe. You may feel out of breath.



This is normal when your lung has collapsed and stops working properly.



A collapsed lung may be scary, but your lungs can cope well even if 1 of them is collapsed.

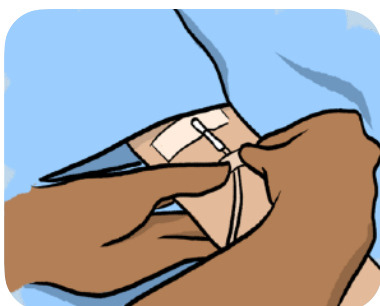


You may get other feelings as well.
You should tell your medical team, like your doctor, about any other feelings in your body.

Going to hospital

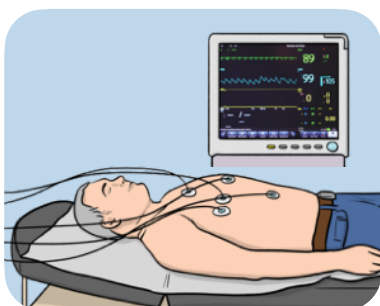


Most people with a pneumothorax will go to be checked in a hospital.



A doctor or nurse at the hospital will:

- Take some of your blood to test it. They can find out a lot about your health from your blood.



- Do an ECG - this is a simple test that checks your heart.



- Take an **X-ray** of the insides of your chest. An **X-ray** is made by a special type of camera that can take pictures of inside your body.



The X-ray will show how much of your lung has collapsed from the pneumothorax.

How a pneumothorax is treated



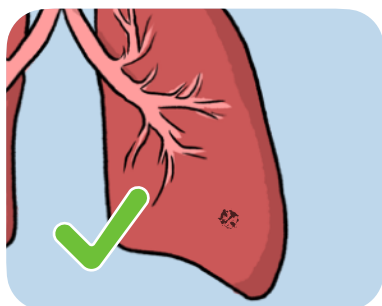
There are different ways to treat a pneumothorax.

Your medical team will help to choose what is best for you.

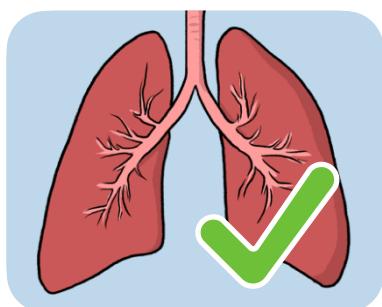


You will be given some painkillers - this is medicine to help with the pain of your collapsed lung.

Wait and watch



Your medical team may say it is best to do nothing and let your lung heal itself.

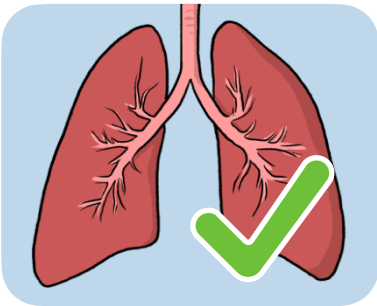


As the tear or hole in your lung fixes itself, the trapped air will disappear and your lung will go back to normal.

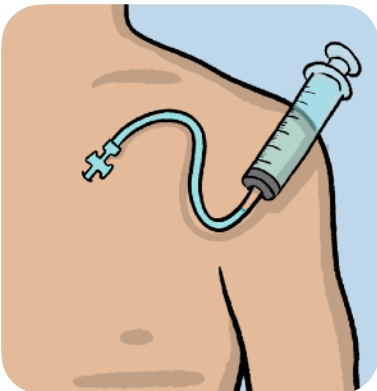
Release the trapped air



Your medical team may say it is better to release the air that is trapped in your chest.

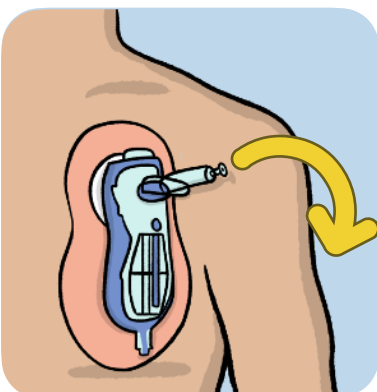


This will be done to let your lung go back to normal quicker than leaving it to heal itself.



The trapped air can be released using a needle or small tube.

A needle would go into your chest with a syringe to suck out the trapped air.



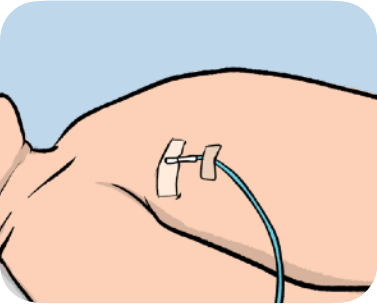
Or you might have small tube fitted to your chest to let the air out, but not in.

You could go home with the tube in, and come back to hospital when you are better to have it removed.

Chest drain



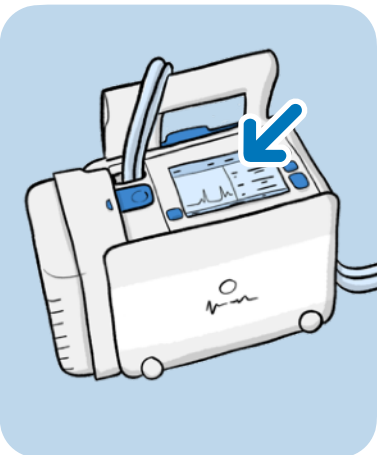
You have to stay in hospital for a chest drain.



It is done by stitching a small tube into your chest and connecting it to a bottle with water in it.



The air that is trapped in your chest bubbles out into the bottle.



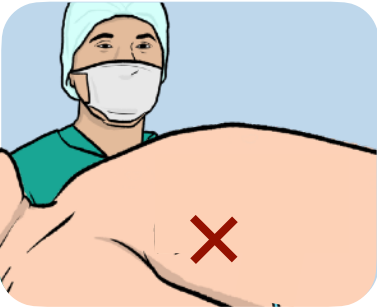
Your medical team may use an electronic device connected to the chest drain, instead of the bottle of water.

The device will be able to show how much of the trapped air has been released.

Surgery



In some cases, it may be better to repair your lung with an operation.



This will mean making a small hole in your chest to fix your lung.



Surgery will be done under a general anaesthetic - this is medicine to make you fall asleep so you don't feel anything.

Find out more

The information in this booklet has been written by:



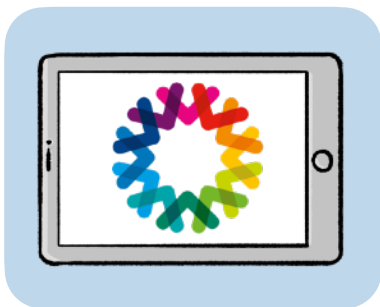
- West Midlands Academic Health Science Network.



- Accelerated Access Collaborative.



- NHS health professionals, and patients who have had a pneumothorax.



To find out more about West Midlands Academic Health Science Network go to: www.wmahsn.org



To find out more about Accelerated Access Collaborative go to: www.england.nhs.uk/aac

Help to stop smoking



People who smoke are more likely to have a pneumothorax. These services can help you to stop smoking:



- The NHS quit smoking website: www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking



- The NHS Quit Smoking **App**: www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking

An **app** is a computer programme for your phone or tablet.



- The free Smokefree National Helpline. Phone: 0300 123 1044

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