

## Pleural Disease

- Diseases primarily affecting the pleural space include Pneumothorax and Pleural Effusion
- Pleural effusions can occur as a result of a number of intra and extra-thoracic diseases including malignancy, infection (including TB), pulmonary embolism, autoimmune disease, heart failure, and liver disease

### Information Required

- Symptoms (local and systemic)
- Smoking history
- Asbestos exposure history
- Drug history
- Known past/current malignancies
- Co-morbidities (particularly connective tissue disease, cardiac disease, liver disease)

### Investigations Required

- Full blood count, Electrolytes, LFTs, CRP, Coags
- SaO2
- CXR
- CTPA or CT chest with contrast if PE/malignancy suspected

### Fax Referrals to

FMC Outpatient Clinic    Fax: (08) 8204 6105 (Clinic B)  
 Noarlunga GP Plus        Fax: (08) 8384 9711

## Red Flags – Requiring urgent review

### Prompting consideration of other diagnosis, particularly malignancy

- 🚩 Abrupt onset of symptoms (pain, breathlessness), particularly if known Emphysema or recent chest trauma
- 🚩 Features of infection/sepsis with persistent pleural effusion
- 🚩 Lung/pleural mass on imaging
- 🚩 Unilateral pleural effusion

### Suggested GP Management

- Withhold anticoagulant/antiplatelet therapy pending pleural fluid sampling
- Cease any medications which could cause pleural effusion
- Trial diuretics if effusion likely transudate (history of left ventricular failure, hypoalbuminaemia) particularly if bilateral effusions present
- Do not attempt pleural fluid sampling without ultrasound guidance

### Clinical Resources

- <https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/guidelines-and-quality-standards/pleural-disease-guideline/>
- British Thoracic Society pleural disease guideline <http://www.thoracic.org.au/professional-information/position-papers-guidelines/mesothelioma/>
- Asbestos Diseases Research Institute mesothelioma guideline <http://www.pneumotox.com/>

General Information to assist with referrals and the Referral templates for FMC and Noarlunga GP Plus are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients).

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2.0	August 2017	August 2019	Original