

**Ambulatory Emergency Care Service
Pleural Effusion Pathway**

Patients with unilateral pleural effusion – assessing suitability for AEC

History and examination
CXR
Bloods (FBC, U&E, LFT,
clotting)

| Ambulatory criteria | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Pulse | <100 |
| Respiratory rate | <25 |
| Oxygen saturations | >93% RA |
| Systolic BP | >100 |

Patient meets ambulatory
care criteria

No → Consider admission

Yes

(USS guided) pleural tap for
paired protein, glucose, LDH;
pH; cytology; microbiology
CXR post procedure

→ Simple parapneumonic effusion

Complicated parapneumonic
effusion

Observe for 1 hour post
procedure and discharge with
antibiotics
Follow up as below

Admit / consider ICD / refer to
Respiratory or ID

Follow up in chest clinic
with CT (+/- staging) if
malignancy suspected (2
week wait)

Follow up in general
chest clinic 4 weeks
with CXR

NB: Ambulatory Care Unit to complete all on-going referrals, where required, where initial referral will be classed as First Appointment