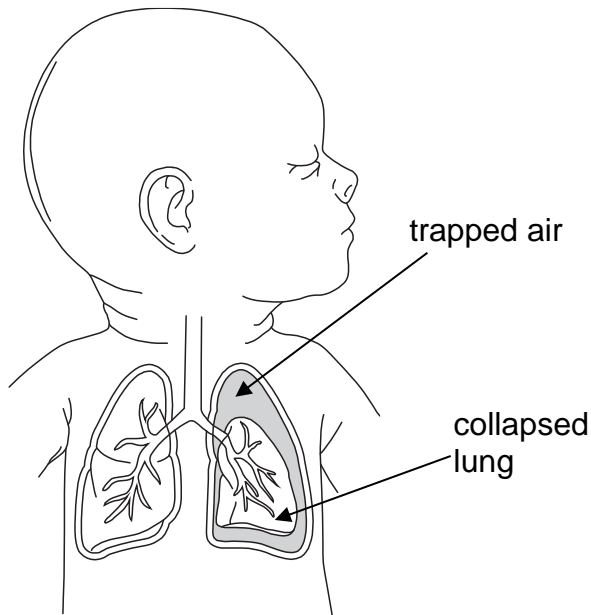


Pneumothorax

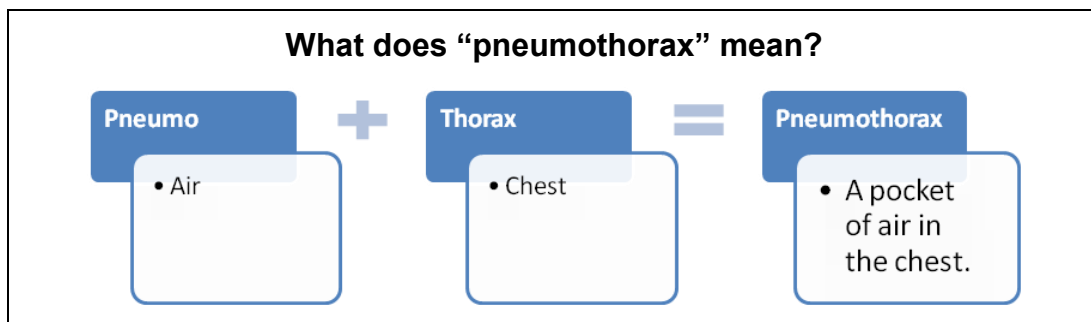
What is a pneumothorax?



A pneumothorax is caused by air leaking through a small tear or hole in the lung.

A pocket of air collects in the chest and puts pressure on the lung, which can cause it to collapse. This may happen on one or both sides of the chest.

We know that your baby has a pneumothorax from the chest x-ray. It shows air trapped outside the lungs and a collapsed lung.



How does this affect my baby?

A collapsed lung can cause your baby to have difficulty breathing. If the air leak is small it causes only mild breathing problems. A large pneumothorax can make breathing very difficult.

How is a pneumothorax treated?

No treatment may be needed. The trapped air may be absorbed by the body.

With a large pneumothorax, the air may need to be removed. Sometimes a needle will be used to remove the pocket of air and it will not collect again. If it does collect again, or is a very large pneumothorax, a chest tube or catheter is placed between the ribs into the pocket of air. The air drains out through the tube. The drainage tube is left in place until the leak is healed and no more air collects.

Does putting in the tube hurt my baby?

To prevent pain, we will give your baby pain medication before the tube is put in. The nurses will check your baby's response to the medication and make him or her as comfortable as possible.

Will this help my baby breathe better?

Draining the air may be all your baby needs to breathe better. Some babies will need more help with breathing and need to go on a ventilator.

How long does a pneumothorax take to heal?

A pneumothorax usually heals in a few days. Before taking out the tube, it is clamped shut and another chest x-ray is done. If your baby is breathing well and no more air is leaking out of the lungs, the tube can be removed. If the air collects in the chest again, the tube will be unclamped, allowing the air to drain out. A few days later, we will try again to remove the tube.

If you have any questions about your pneumothorax or your baby please speak with a member of your care team.