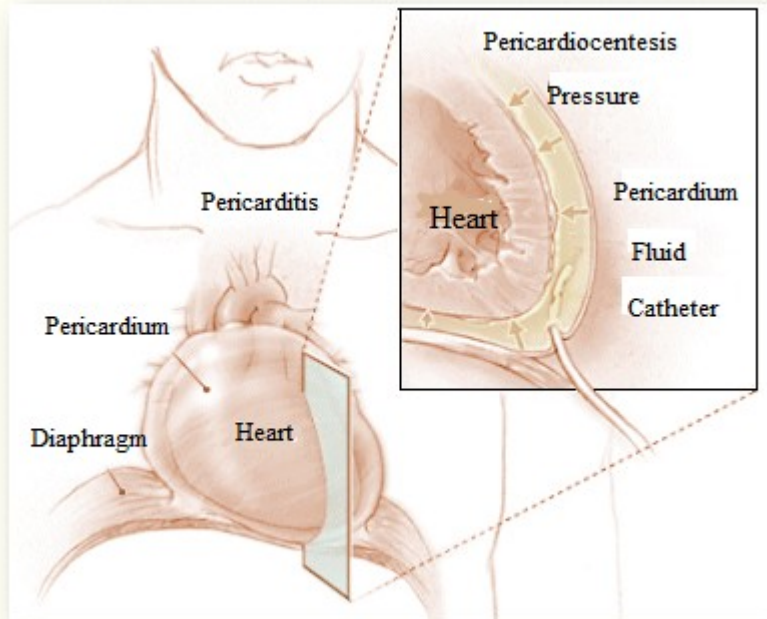




INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS UNDERGOING PERICARDIOCENTESIS

Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Giuliano Isontina



Pericardiocentesis is indicated for the treatment of pericardial effusion.

Before undergoing the procedure, a doctor will explain the purposes and methods of carrying out the procedure.

The procedure consists in the extraction of liquid contained within the pericardium, for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes (in case of cardiac tamponade).

It is important to know that:

- the examination is performed under local anesthesia;
- a needle is introduced from the subxiphoid (inferior to the sternum) or apical region up to the pericardial cavity;
- a series of biochemical and microbiological evaluations can be

performed on the sample;

- the procedure may include the introduction of a drainage catheter which may remain in place for a few days and which will allow the removal of liquid and/or the introduction of medicines.

Predictable outcomes of non-treatment

Non-execution of the procedure implies the possibility of serious cardiovascular events, including sudden death, which in the current state of medical knowledge cannot be treated with pharmacological therapies.

Most common risks of this procedure

Complications are extremely rare such as ventricular fibrillation (with the need for an electric shock) or pneumothorax (passage of air into the pleura).

The risks associated with the procedure are linked to the possibility of vagal reactions, i.e. slowing of the heartbeat and reduction in blood pressure, or to the perforation of the cardiac structures with consequent worsening of the pericardial effusion and in rare cases, the need for cardiac surgery.

The Healthcare Personnel and the facility where the procedures take place are prepared for the immediate treatment of all possible complications.

CARDIOLOGICAL INTENSIVE THERAPY UNIT

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