

University of Florida College of Medicine

The interpleural distance is the distance between the visceral and parietal pleura and a safe thoracentesis distance is about 10-15 mm. This will ensure that you have a bit of an error margin when puncturing the chest wall

1. What is the minimal interpleural distance considered to be safe to perform thoracentesis?

- A. 5 mm
- B. 10-15 mm
- C. 20 mm
- D. 30 mm

2. The distance between the visceral and parietal pleural layers is called:

- A. Interpleural distance
- B. Dynamic pleural distance
- C. Fluid distance
- D. Separation distance

3. When performing thoracentesis, the optimal angle of entry in relationship to the ribs is:

- A. Perpendicular
- B. 45 degrees
- C. Parallel

4. In a supine position, the interpleural distance at the base of the lung greater than 50 mm corresponds to a pleural effusion greater than:

- A. 50 mL
- B. 500 mL
- C. 1000 mL
- D. 1500 mL

5. T or F: When performing thoracentesis, the patient should not be moved in between ultrasound imaging and needle puncture when real time ultrasound is not used

- A. True
- B. False

Question	Your Answer	Correct Answer
1		
2		
3		

The angle of entry should be perpendicular to the ribs in order to reach the chest wall in the most direct way

Reviewer Comments
In a supine patient, when you measure 5 cm (or 50 mm), between the chest wall and the lung line, you can be safe to say that at least 500 mL of fluid is in the chest. There are a number of alternative methods to quantitate fluid.

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When using ultrasound guided thoracentesis, one must be sure to not move the patient from the time the ultrasound is obtained to when thoracentesis is performed. This will minimize errors