



# OSCE Checklist: Ascitic tap (diagnostic paracentesis)

| Introduction                                |  |
|---|--|
| 1   | Gather equipment   |
| 2   | Wash your hands using alcohol gel. If your hands are visibly soiled, wash them with soap and water. Don PPE if appropriate.  |
| 3   | Introduce yourself to the patient including your name and role   |
| 4   | Confirm the patient's name and date of birth   |
| 5   | Briefly explain what the procedure will involve using patient-friendly language  |
| 6   | Gain consent to proceed with an ascitic tap  |
| 7   | Check if the patient has any allergies (e.g. to local anaesthetic)   |
| 8   | Check for any contraindications (e.g. infection overlying needle insertion site) or cautions (coagulopathy, thrombocytopenia, pregnancy and organomegaly)  |
| 9   | Ask the patient if they have any pain before continuing with the clinical procedure  |
| Confirm ascites and identify insertion site |  |
| 10  | Position the patient lying flat  |
| 11  | Perform an abdominal examination to confirm the presence of ascites (shifting dullness)  |
| 12  | Identify appropriate needle insertion site (if available: consider using ultrasound)   |
| 13  | Remove equipment from packaging onto sterile surface   |
| Prepare the insertion site                  |  |
| 14  | Wash your hands again and don sterile gloves and an apron  |
| 15  | Clean the insertion site and surrounding area thoroughly using chlorhexadine solution and allow to dry   |
| Perform the ascitic tap                     |  |
| 16  | If patient requests local anaesthetic: administer lidocaine subcutaneously to create a bleb over the planned puncture site, then administer lidocaine deeper into the tissue whilst aspirating until flashback of ascitic fluid seen |
| 17  | Attach a 19G needle to a 20ml syringe  |
| 18  | Hold the needle perpendicular to the skin over the planned needle insertion site   |
| 19  | Advance the needle slowly whilst aspirating until ascitic fluid is seen  |
| 20  | Aspirate 20ml of ascitic fluid   |
| 21  | Withdraw the needle, disconnect from the syringe and dispose of the needle in a sharps bin   |
| 22  | Apply a sterile dressing to the area   |
| 23  | Place the aspirated ascitic fluid into appropriate specimen containers   |

### To complete the procedure...

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| <b>24</b> | Explain to the patient that the procedure is now complete  |  |
| <b>25</b> | Thank the patient for their time   |  |
| <b>26</b> | Document the patient's details on the sample containers at the bedside (either pre-printed labels or handwritten)                              |  |
| <b>27</b> | Dispose of PPE and other clinical waste appropriately and wash your hands  |  |
| <b>28</b> | Document the procedure in the medical notes (including use of local anaesthetic, volume/ colour of ascitic fluid, any immediate complications) |  |
| <b>29</b> | Send the ascitic fluid samples to the lab for analysis in an appropriate plastic leak-proof bag with the completed laboratory request form     |  |

Read the full guide at  
[geekymedics.com](https://www.geekymedics.com)



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