



# 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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