

Thoracic Surgery Specialist Clinics at Western Health:

Western Health provides the following Specialist Clinics for patients who require assessment and management of thoracic conditions. Patients will be clinically triaged into management pathways according to specific clinical requirements.

Conditions not seen by Thoracic Surgeons at Western Health:

- Thoracic aortic aneurysm- Cardiothoracic surgery services at other networks [Royal Melbourne Hospital](#), or [St Vincents](#)
- Non-surgical lung conditions (e.g. lung infections, asthma, COPD) -> refer to relevant respiratory clinic
- Non-surgical cardiac conditions (e.g. hypertension, cardiac failure, suspected coronary artery, valvular or adult congenital disease needing investigation -> refer to relevant cardiology clinic)

Thoracic Surgery Alarm Symptoms:

Any patient presenting with the following should present directly to an emergency department:

- Acute pneumothorax
- Pleural effusion / empyema; rapidly accumulating or significant symptoms at rest (e.g. breathlessness)
- Thoracic surgery post-operative issues (clinically critical, bleeding, signs of infection, worsening symptoms e.g. breathlessness)
- Significant thoracic trauma
- Acute chest pain
- Stridor

Access & Referral Priority for Thoracic Surgery Clinic:

The clinical information provided in your referral will determine the triage category. The triage category will affect the timeframe in which the patient is offered an appointment.

URGENT Appointment timeframe 30 days.	ROUTINE Appointment timeframe greater than 30 days, depending on clinical need.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspicious or malignant lung lesions • Pleural effusion / empyema - symptomatic large pleural effusion • Thoracic surgery post-operative issues (non-critical) • Endothoracic tumours • Foreign body in airway or oesophagus • On call thoracic surgical registrar can be contacted to discuss complex or urgent referrals • Haemoptysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleural effusion all newly diagnosed asymptomatic effusions should be referred for investigation • Chest wall lesions or deformities • Rib Fracture

Condition Specific Referral Guidelines:

Key information enables Western Health to triage patients to the correct category and provide treatment with fewer visits to specialist clinics, creating more capacity for care. If key information is missing, you may be asked to return the referral with the required information.

Condition:	Key Information Points:	Clinical Investigations:
Lung lesions Includes Lung nodules and ground glass opacity lesions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respiratory history including symptoms assessment Include smoking / workplace exposure history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest x-ray CT scan of chest
Pleural effusion / empyema Refer directly to ED if acutely unwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of condition including: breathlessness and symptoms, signs of underlying condition (e.g. heart failure, neoplasia, infection) Include smoking / workplace exposure history If history of respiratory disorders, consider additional referral to Respiratory Clinic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest x-ray LDH, FBE, total protein, LFTs echocardiogram if cardiac history or cardiac symptoms CT chest if features of malignancy or infection
Thoracic surgery post-operative issues <i>*Refer back to original provider if possible</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include details of previous surgical management (location, surgeon) if available 	If available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wound infections: swabs sent for microbiology & details of any antibiotic therapy initiated by GP FBE including inflammatory/infection markers (CRP, ESR)
Foreign body in airway or oesophagus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical history including respiratory or gastrointestinal symptoms and examination findings Details of treatment to date and response, impact on function, work and carer duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imaging if available
Haemoptysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of condition including : breathlessness and symptoms, signs of underlying condition (e.g. heart failure, neoplasia, infection) Include smoking / workplace exposure history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest x-ray CT scan of chest
Rib fracture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical history and examination findings Medications including anti-inflammatory and analgesic use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imaging if available
Endothoracic tumours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical history including respiratory symptoms and examination findings include relevant family history smoking and/or workplace exposure history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest x ray CT
Chest wall lesions or deformities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical history including respiratory symptoms and examination findings Functional limitations Include smoking / workplace exposure history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chest x-ray (PA and lateral)