

How to Care for your Post-Operative Drain

What is the drain for?

During surgery, tubes (drains) are commonly placed under the skin to allow excess blood and fluids to drain out of the body.

Drains are helpful in allowing the surgical wound to heal faster.

Drains come in a few different shapes and sizes, but most are patterned after the original suction drain called the Jackson Pratt drain. However, all drains work on the same principle.

The drain is actually inside your body. The tubing from the drain (which is usually sutured to the skin at the exit site) connects to a bulb. The bulb, when squeezed empty and reconnected to the tubing, applies suction to the drain and pulls the fluid out of the body.

Your drains are removed when the excess fluids have finished draining from your body, Removal of the drains will be done by a nurse during an office visit several days or weeks after surgery.

The following instructions will help you care for your drains at home. Call your surgeon's office if you have any questions about your drains.

How do I Empty My Drain?

1. Wash your hands thoroughly.
2. Strip or "milk" the drainage tubes going from exit site (out of your body) downward to container.
 - a. Beginning at the exit site, hold drainage tubing with one hand and with the other hand stretch and release tubing and inch at a time, while moving downward, with both hands, towards the container.
 - b. Do this 2-3 times before emptying the container.
3. Remove the plug from the container's spout or "drainage port."
4. Pour drainage into measuring cup.
5. Flatten container to create a vacuum and replace plug from drainage port. The vacuum helps draw out the fluids from under your skin.
6. Empty your drains 3 times a day, or as often as needed if it is filling up before 8 hours. Record your drain amounts on the chart included and report them to the triage nurse daily at 762-235-2100. When your drain output is low enough you will be scheduled for an office visit to have your drains removed.

What Things Should I Report to My Doctor?

- You should call your doctor if you see redness or swelling of the skin, or significant drainage around the area where the tube exits your body.

- You should call your doctor if you are unable to flatten the drainage container. This may signify a leak in the drainage fluid.
- You should call your doctor if your tubing falls out.

What are Helpful Hints that might help?

- Safety pin the drainage container to your clothing during the day and to your sleepwear at night. Allow enough slack for accidental tugging of the tube during daily activities and sleep. **DO NOT PUT THE SAFETY PIN THROUGH THE TUBING OR BULB.**
- Do not attach the drainage container to your pants or underwear.
- Attach the container below the level of the exit site.

Drain Output Log

Date						
AM Amount						
PM Amount						
Eve Amount						

Report your drain amounts daily by calling the triage nurse at 762-235-2100. When your drain output is low enough you will be scheduled to have them removed in the office.