

General Surgery

Drain Care



The drain suction and collects fluid to promote healing. The fluid needs to be measured daily until the doctor removes the drain. You may have more than one drain. Keep a separate record for each drain. Your nurse will show you how to care for your drain before you leave the hospital

To strip the drain:

- Wash hands before and after handling the drain to reduce the risk of infection
- Pinch tubing and hold securely close to where the tubing comes from the body
- With the other hand, hold the tubing between your forefinger and thumb
- Gently squeeze the tubing - moving the fluid and possible clots away from the body and toward the collection bulb (drain)
- Release the tubing closest to the body first and re-pinch tubing close to the lower hand (before moving the lower hand)
- Continue squeezing the tubing until you have squeezed all the fluid into the bulb (drain)
- The bulb (drain) should be compressed during this procedure

To empty the drain:

- Un-pin the drain from your garment or dressing
- Open the rubber stopper
- Gently squeeze the contents into a measuring cup. Empty the drain being careful not to touch anything with the opening of the drain
- Measure the contents and record the amount in milliliters
- Dispose of cup after use
- Close the drain
- Change the dressing around the drain tubing daily
- To prevent dislodging the drain, re-pin the drain to your garment or dressing below your heart level
- Wash hands
- Sometimes there may be dried blood in the tubing – this is normal
- **Bring this record to all of your appointments with your doctor.** This amount of measured drainage is important for determining drain removal. You may take the dressing off in the morning and shower

Be sure to call your surgeon if:

- Leaking occurs around the drain tubing insertion area
- Leaking, redness or swelling at the drain tubing insertion area
- Sudden increase in fluid in the bulb (drain) (> 200 ml in 24 hours)
- No drainage at all in the drain