

Surgical Drains

A surgical drain is a soft flexible plastic tube that is connected to a plastic collection bulb. Drains are used to prevent fluid from collecting at the surgery site while the body is healing. They usually remain in place anywhere from a couple of days to a couple of weeks postoperatively, or until the drainage decreases to a small amount (30 milliliters or less over 24 hours). Drains are not left in longer than 4 weeks.

While your drain is in place:

1. It is okay to shower
2. Keep the drain-collecting bulb anchored to your clothing to prevent accidentally pulling it out.
3. Clean the drain insertion site daily using this procedure:
 - Prepare a small cup of solution: ½ tap water and ½ hydrogen peroxide
 - Dip a clean cotton-tipped swab in the solution and cleanse around the drain area (do NOT dip a used swab back into the clean solution).
 - Apply a clean drain sponge around the drain and tape as necessary.

Emptying the Drain

- Empty the collection bulb on your drain 3 times daily (or more often if necessary) using the following procedure:
- Open the small lid on the top of the bulb and pour the drainage into the measuring container or cup.
- Squeeze the bulb and hold it while closing the lid. The bulb needs to be collapsed to create the suction needed to drain the incision area.
- Measure the drainage amount in the cup and record it on a sheet of paper. Record each drain amount separately.

After your drain is removed:

Your drain will be removed in the office. Once it has been removed you may notice a small collection of fluid at the site. A small collection of fluid is normal. This will not harm you and will reabsorb into the tissue within a month or two. If the fluid becomes very large (about the size of an orange), you should notify the office. This fluid collection is not an emergency.

Once the drain has been removed, you should follow these guidelines:

Keep the site dry with a gauze dressing over it for the first 48 hours.
Use only soap and water for cleaning.
Some leaking at the drain site is normal. Do not be alarmed.