

About Your Surgical Drain

During your surgery, your doctors put in a drain to help your body get rid of extra fluids and lower your risk of infection.

The drain is attached to a container that collects fluid. The fluid is usually a light pink color. A small amount of blood may drain. This is normal. You may feel some burning and pulling from the stitch that holds the tube in place. A bandage over the place where the drain comes out helps protect the area from infection.

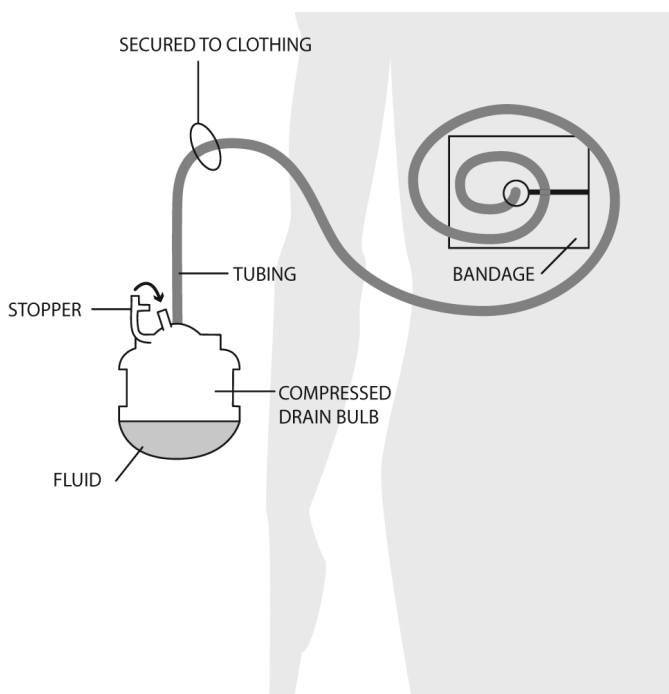


Illustration of a surgical drain

You Are Part of Your Care Team

It is important to follow these care instructions. Proper care lowers your risk of getting an infection. It also helps keep the time you will need the drain as short as possible.

Your care team needs to know how much fluid is draining. You need to measure the amount of fluid in the container at least twice a day. Your care team will take out the drain when less than 2 tablespoons of fluid drains in a day, or in about two weeks after surgery, whichever comes first.

When you go home, be sure to record the amount of drained fluid at least twice a day. Let your care team know if you have any questions or concerns.

How Do I Care for the Drain at Home?

- Avoid sleeping on the side of your body with the drain.
- Pin the tube and bag inside your clothing. This will keep the tube from pulling out.
- You can shower while the drain is in place. Tape plastic wrap over the bandage area.
- Keep the drain and stitches as dry as possible. Do not take baths or soak in a hot tub while the drain is in place.

How Do I Empty the Drain?

Empty the drain bulb when it is $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ full. Empty it at least twice a day—more often if needed. Follow these steps:

1. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.
2. Put on new latex gloves. They help protect you from infection.
3. Lift the stopper on the drain bulb.
4. Empty the fluid into the measuring cup you got from the hospital. Use this cup only for measuring the fluid.
5. Write down the amount of fluid each time you empty the drain. Share this information with your care team during your next visit or over the phone.
6. Flush the fluid down the toilet after you measure it. Rinse the measuring cup with warm water.
7. Squeeze the drain bulb until it is pressed almost flat. You will hear air coming out.
8. Put the stopper back into the flat drain bulb.
9. Take off the gloves. Throw them away.
10. Wash and dry your hands.

How Do I Change the Bandage?

Change the bandage around the tube every day:

1. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.
2. Put on new latex gloves.
3. Take off the old bandage.
4. Use saline (salt and water) solution to wash the area where the drain comes out.
5. Make sure the new bandage is large enough to cover the whole area.
6. Tape the bandage in place.
7. Take off the gloves. Throw them away.
8. Wash and dry your hands.