

Instructions of Drain Care

What are Drains?

For many years, surgical drains have been used in different operations with the best intentions. Even though there are many associated doubts about surgical drains, many surgeons continue to follow this practice. Due to a lack of absolute evidence, the controversial issues related to surgical drains could not be resolved. In the presence of required evidence, the surgeons will be able to improvise their practices on surgical drains based on scientific principles.

Purpose of Surgical Drains

Drains resemble a piece of rubber in the form of a tube used to secure a suture. They are used to remove excess fluid accumulated under skin flaps or the empty spaces in the surgical area. They will be placed for a couple of weeks after surgery. The amount of fluid accumulated in the drains will be more in the first two weeks of surgery and later it diminishes. A drain helps reduce the pain and helps in healing the wound faster.

Types of Surgical Drains

There are many types of drains based on their usage, type of surgery, site of the surgery, and the preference of the surgeon. The chest tubes are a type of drain that holds the fluids accumulated around the heart due to cardiac surgery. The small bulb-type drains are used to apply gentle suction. Similarly, depending upon the nature of the problem and requirement, one or a combination of drains are used.

Color of a Surgical Drain

Usually, a drain will be in red at the beginning of the post-operation period. It then turns pink and changes to yellow color slowly.

Caring of Surgical Drain

Protecting the drain and keeping it hygienic becomes a significant activity after returning home post-surgery. You must make sure that should not get accidentally removed due to over-accumulation of fluids.

Always wash your hands before touching the surgical area or the drain. Clean the area gently while showering by applying a mild soap. Immediately soak the drenched surgical area and drain with a soft, dry cloth and allow it to dry. Taking a shower or drenching your body should be done as per the instructions of your surgeon. Inspect the area regularly for signs of infection, if any.

Removing a Surgical Drain

In case if there is no fluid coming out, the drain can be removed by cutting the sutures and pulling them out gently. It is better if the drain is removed under the supervision of medical staff or a professional medical practitioner. If you feel any resistance while removing the drain,

you may stop the procedure and resume only when convenient. Usually, the removal of a surgical drain does not hurt. It only gives an odd feeling when the tubing slides out of the body. The incision is either left open or covered with a simple dressing.

Emptying Surgical Drain

Follow the below steps to empty a surgical drain –

- Wash your hands with mild soap.
- By holding a bulb in the upright position, remove the cap from the other hand.
- Turn the bulb over the small measuring cup and squeeze the grenade gently into the cup. Replace topper to continue suction.
- The drainage should be measured and recorded in CCs.
- Flush out the collected drainage in a toilet.
- The cup can be reused and therefore, rinse and store in a clean place.
- Wash your hands again with a mild soap.
- Re-pin the drain to your clothing, slightly lower than your incision.
- Carry your drainage recorded chart for your next review.

Frequency of Emptying the Surgical Drain

During the first two weeks of the surgery, you may have to empty the drain three or more times a day. But as drainage tapers off, you may have to empty it only once a day.

Contact Us If:

- You have a temperature of 100.5F degrees or higher.
- The drainage stops suddenly.
- The drainage increases more than usual.
- The drain stitch breaks leaking out the drainage.
- There is pus or foul odor in the drain.
- You have developed unusual symptoms at the surgery place, which may include bleeding, redness, tenderness, etc.

Drainage chart – Please bring to your post-operation review visit.

Date	Time	Amount