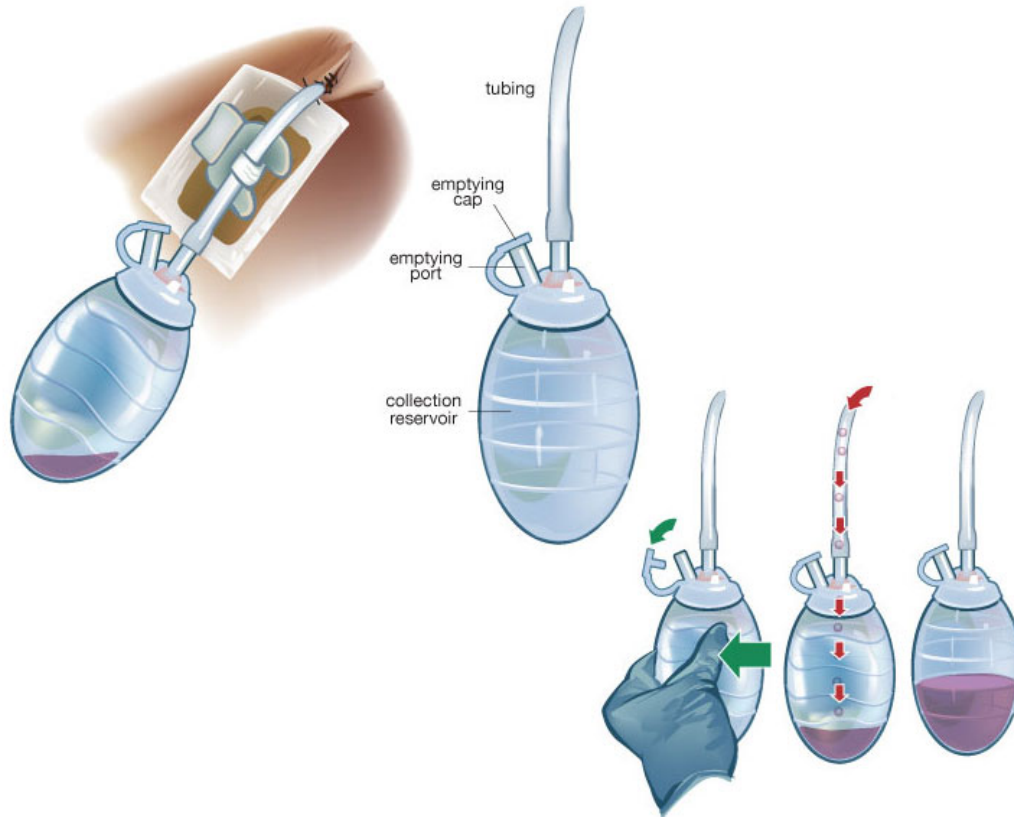


Care of Your Surgical Drain



Drains are soft, plastic tubes placed in the area of your surgery to drain away fluid that collects under the skin as you heal. The drains are attached to suction bulbs where the fluid collects. The amount of fluid that collects each day will slowly decrease. The color of the drainage will change from red to reddish-yellow, then to a yellowish-white color.

Managing your drains

There are three things you will need to do with each drain:

1. “Milk” the drain so that it does not clog
2. Empty the suction bulb and measure the amount of fluid in it
3. Keep a record of the amount of fluid that collects in each suction bulb

“Milking” the drain tubing

It is common for clots to form in the tubing which will clog the drain. To keep the tube open, you need to “milk” it at least twice a day. “Milking” the drain means sliding your pinched fingers along the tubing to push any clots down into the suction bulb.



How to “milk” a drain

1. With one hand, hold the drain tube in place close to the skin. Pinch it firmly so it doesn't move or pull your skin.
2. With the other hand, pinch your thumb and index finger around the tube. Slide your pinched fingers along the tubing, pulling downward to push the fluid toward the suction bulb.
3. Start at the top, close to the drain insertion site and go all the way down the tube.

Emptying the Drains

Empty each drain twice a day, or more if the suction bulb gets full.

Record the amount of fluid in each drain separately. Use the drainage record at the end of this pamphlet.

How to empty the suction bulb

1. Open the plug at the top of the suction bulb.
2. Pour the fluid from the bulb into the measuring cup. Squeeze the bulb to empty it completely.
3. Measure the amount of fluid. Write down the amount of fluid from each drain separately.
4. Squeeze the air out of the bulb and close the plug. The sides of the bulb should be indented. This is what creates the suction to draw out the fluid.
5. After measuring and recording the amount of fluid, you can flush the fluid down the toilet.

Call for an appointment to have the drain removed when the amount of fluid collected over 24 hours is less than 30 cc. (The cup is marked.)

Removing the Drains

- The drains will be removed by your surgeon when the amount of fluid collected over twenty-four hours decreases to 30 cc or less. This usually takes seven to fourteen days. A drain can remain an extra day or two, but it is important not to remove it too early.
- Until your drains are removed you will need to care for them and write down the amount of fluid that collects.

After the drain or drains are removed:

Keep a piece of gauze over the drain site until there has been no spotting on the gauze for 24 hours. This is usually 2 to 3 days after the drain is removed.

Post-Surgery Drainage Record

Bring your Drainage Record to your drain removal office visit.