About Your Surgical Drain

During your surgery, a drain was placed that will help your body get rid of extra fluids and lower your risk of infection after surgery.

The drain is attached to a device that collects fluid. The fluid is usually a light pink color. A small amount of blood may drain, which is normal. You may feel some burning and pulling from the stitch that holds the tube in place. A bandage at the incision site helps protect the area from infection.

Caring for Your Drain at Home

- Avoid sleeping on the side of your body with the drain.
- Secure the tube and bag inside your clothing. This will keep the tube from pulling out.
- Empty your drain at least twice a day (or more often if needed) by following these steps:
  1. Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.
  2. Put on latex gloves (to help protect you from infection).
  3. Lift the stopper on the drain.
  4. Empty the fluid into a measuring cup.
  5. Write down the amount of fluid each time you empty the drain. Share this information with your health care team during your next visit or over the phone.
  6. After measuring the fluid, you can flush it down the toilet.
  7. After emptying the drain, squeeze the bulb with your hands until it is compressed. You will hear air coming out.
  8. Place the stopper back into the drain to create suction.

Changing the Bandage

Change the bandage around the tube every day by following these steps:

- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly.
- Put on latex gloves.
- Remove the old bandage.
- Use saline (salt and water) solution to wash the incision site.
- Make sure the bandage is large enough to cover the whole incision site.
- Tape the bandage in place.

Also, be sure to cover the bandage with plastic wrap when you shower. Avoid soaking the drain or stitches. It is important to follow these care instructions. If your drain and incision site are not cared for properly, you are at risk of getting an infection or needing the drain longer than recommended.
When Should I Call My Doctor?

Call your doctor’s office right away if you develop any of these symptoms:

**Signs of infection**
- Pain, swelling, or skin changes around the tube
- Pain that gets worse or isn’t relieved with medicine
- Redness or warmth around the incision site
- A foul smell from the drain or incision site
- Nausea or vomiting
- Chills, or fever above 100°F

**Signs of healing problems**
- Fluid changing from light pink to dark red or cloudy
- Increased fluid in the bulb for more than two days in a row
- Fluid draining from your incision
- Blood filling quickly into the drain
- Stitches that become infected or loose

**Signs of problems with the drain**
- A tube that falls out on its own
- Leaks, holes, or cracks in the drain, tubing, or bulb
- A drain bulb that will not stay collapsed or keep suction
- A block in the drain

Please return for your follow-up appointment as instructed.

**Contact Numbers**

Doctor ________________________________
Nurse ________________________________
PA or NP ______________________________

After hours or weekends: 801-581-2121 and ask for the on-call resident for your type of cancer.