

## HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR DRAIN

The drain is a special tube that prevents body fluid from collecting near the site of your surgery. The drain suctions and collects fluid into a bulb. The bulb can be emptied and the fluid intake measured.

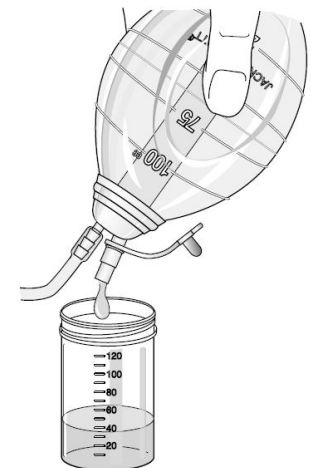
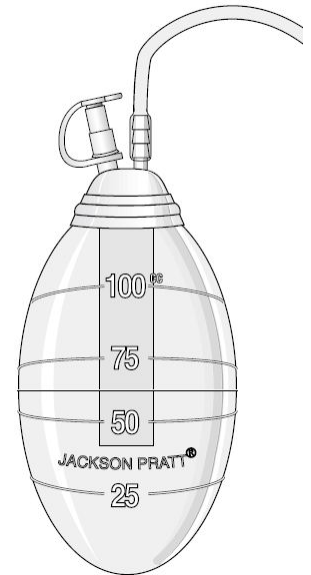
At first, this fluid is bloody. Then, as your wound heals, the fluid changes to pink, light yellow or clear. The drain will stay in place until the drainage slows enough for your body to reabsorb fluid on its own.

Caring for the drain is easy. Depending on how much fluid drains from your surgical site, you will need to empty the bulb every 8 to 12 hours. The bulb should be emptied when it is half full. Before you are discharged from the hospital, your nurse will show you how to:

- Empty the collection bulb
- Record the amount of fluid collected
- Put the bulb back in place so that the suction works again
- Keep the drain site clean and free of infection

### How to empty the drain

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water.
2. Unpin the drain from your clothing.
3. Pull the plug out of the bulb.
4. Pour the fluid inside the bulb into the measuring cup from the hospital. Make sure to record the contents of each drain separately.
5. Clean the plug with alcohol and then squeeze the bulb flat. While the bulb is flat, put the plug back into the bulb. The bulb should stay flat after it is plugged so that the vacuum suction can restart. If you can't squeeze the bulb flat and plug it at the same time, use a hard flat surface (such as a table) to help you press the bulb flat while you re-plug it.
6. Pin the drain back to your clothing to avoid pulling it out accidentally.
7. Measure how much fluid you have collected. Write the amount of drainage and the date and time of the collection on your drainage chart.
8. Flush the fluid down the toilet.
9. Wash your hands.



Squeeze air out of bottle before reattaching (to create sucking pressure)

### **Stripping the drain**

Strip the drain 3x daily or any time the drainage suddenly stops or drainage leaks from around the tubing.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Gently pinch the tubing with one hand near the insertion site. With the other hand, using a pen or pencil, gently squeeze and pull the tubing section until you reach the bulb.

### **How to check for infection**

Watch the skin around the drain for signs of infection:

- Increased redness
- Increased pain
- Increased swelling

Other signs of infection are:

- Fever greater than 101.5 degrees
- Cloudy yellow, tan or foul-smelling drainage

Report any of these symptoms to your doctor as soon as possible.

