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Drain Care

A surgical drain is a soft flexible plastic tube that is connected to a collection bulb. Drains are used to prevent fluid from collecting at the surgical site while the body is healing. They usually remain in place anywhere from a couple of days to a couple of weeks postoperatively. Generally drains are removed once the drainage is a small amount (30 milliliters or 2 tablespoons over 24 hours).

While your drain is in place

1. It is ok to shower
2. Keep the drain-collecting bulb anchored to your clothing to prevent accidentally pulling it out

Emptying the drain

1. Empty the collection bulb on your drain 3 times daily (or more often if needed) using the following procedure
2. Open the small lid on the top of the bulb and pour into a measuring cup or container
3. Squeeze the bulb and hold it while closing the lid. The bulb needs to be collapsed to create the suction to drain the surgical fluid.
4. Measure the drainage and record on a piece of paper. If you have multiple drains, record each separately.

Drain Removal

Your drain will be removed in ambulatory care or same day treatment. Keep the site dry with gauze dressing over the first 48 hours. Use only soap and water for cleaning. Some leaking at the site is normal. Do not be alarmed

After drain Removal

Once it is removed you may notice a small collection of fluid at the site. This is normal and will not cause harm. Fluid will be reabsorbed into the tissue within a month or two. If the fluid collection becomes very large (i.e. bigger than an orange), you should notify the office. The fluid collection is not an emergency.