

C E N T E R F O R
PLASTIC • SURGERY
DR. NICHOLAS ADAMS MD

Instructions for Drain Care

Steps to empty, measure, and record drainage:

1. Wash your hands thoroughly before handling the drains.
2. While the bulb is squeezed flat, “strip” the tubing with an alcohol swab or wet paper towel. This will help get all of the liquid into the bulb and move clots through the tubing to keep the drainage flowing. Pinch the tubing close to where it enters your skin in order to prevent tugging. Strip the tubing 2 or 3 times towards the bulb before you empty the drain
3. Pull the plug out of the bulb to release suction
4. Turn the bulb upside down and empty the contents into the measuring cup provided.. Clean the plug with alcohol. Then squeeze the bulb tightly until completely compressed and flat. While the bulb is flat, put the plug back into the bulb
5. The bulb should stay flat after it is plugged. This way the gentle and constant vacuum suction can restart
6. Measure the amount of fluid you collected in milliliters (ml). Write the amount of drainage and the color as well as the date and time you collected it. Record these on the attached **“Drain Log”**
7. Flush the fluid down the toilet
8. Wash your hands
9. Keep your insertion site clean by letting water and antibacterial soap run over the site while showering.

Troubleshooting Drain Problems

Bulb will not hold suction

If your drain does not stay flat when fully compressed with the plug correctly in place, it will not provide the amount of suction needed to remove the fluid away from your surgical site. If this happens, try to strip the drain tubing several times and try compressing the bulb again. If the bulb continues to not stay flat, *please call the office.*

Drain site is leaking fluid

It is not uncommon for fluid to leak around the drain site. You may reinforce the area with gauze as needed. Make sure that the bulb drain is secured and “flat” for the suction needed.

There are blood clots or debris in the drainage bulb

It is common for small debris or a blood clot to be found inside the tubing or bulb. The blood clot appears as a dark, stringy lining. It could prevent the drainage from flowing through the tube. Try to strip the drain to move the clot into the bulb.

My skin where the drain enters is red and tender

The drain tubing can irritate the skin at the drain entrance site. This is normal and will go away once the drain is removed. You can apply bacitracin ointment to the drain site once daily. You can also use gauze to create a “pillow” around the drain site. Also, holding the tubing to your skin with an additional band-aid can help secure the drain to prevent tugging.. This can help reduce irritation

Caring For Your Skin After Drain Removal

1. Your drain will be removed in the office and a dressing will be placed over the former drain site. You may remove this dressing two days after drain removal.
2. Do not take a bath or submerge the area in water until cleared by Dr. Adams.
3. Keep the former drain site clean by letting soapy water run over the site in the shower and gently pat dry.