

# Care of a Jackson-Pratt Drain

## Jackson-Pratt Drain

The Jackson-Pratt drain is tubing with an attached bulb that promotes draining from a surgical incision. Draining extra fluid helps your tissue heal.

The color of the fluid will usually change from a bright red (right after surgery) to a straw-colored yellow. The fluid may have small blood clots or tissue debris. This is normal.

## How to Care for the Jackson-Pratt

- Do not ever disconnect the bulb or take it apart.
- Keep the bulb compressed all the time, except when you empty it. The compression creates the suction to drain the fluid.
- There is usually more fluid in the bulb the first few days after surgery. Empty the bulb when it is half full. (The bulb does not make enough suction when it is too full.)
- Each time the bulb is emptied write down the amount of drainage on the chart on the other side of this fact sheet.
- As the amount of drainage decreases, empty the bulb at the same time every day (usually at bedtime). Keep track of the totals on the other side of this fact sheet.
- Follow any instructions your doctor gives you about:
  - how to take care of your dressing
  - when you can take a shower or tub bath.

- Drain tubes are stitched in place and will not slip out. Your nurse will show you how to secure your drain tube before you leave the hospital.

## How to Empty the Jackson-Pratt

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Open the stopper to release suction.
- Empty the bulb into the measuring cup that is sent home with you from the hospital. To do this:
  - Open the stopper cap.
  - Turn the bulb upside-down over the measuring cup. You may need to squeeze the bulb to completely empty it.
  - Set the measuring cup aside.
- Compress the bulb by folding it in half. Squeeze it tightly, making a fist. Replace the stopper while the bulb is compressed.
- Check to make sure the tube is secured after emptying the bulb.
- Measure the drainage and write down the amount on the chart on the other side of this fact sheet. If you do more than one drain, figure the totals separately.
- Flush the drainage down the toilet.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.

**(over)**

## When to Strip the Jackson-Pratt

- Strip the Jackson-Pratt only if your doctor has given you instructions to do so.

## How to Strip the Jackson-Pratt

If your doctor has told you to strip the Jackson-Pratt, follow these steps.

- Pinch the top of the tubing close to your body with your thumb and index finger
- Moisten your other thumb and index finger with hand lotion, Vaseline® or rubbing alcohol.
- Squeeze and slide your fingers along the tubing toward the bulb, pinching it all the way down.

## When To Call Your Doctor

Call your doctor if:

- the drain comes out
- the bulb or tube is damaged
- the bulb does not stay compressed after closing
- you have signs or symptoms of infection:
  - chills or a temperature higher than 101 F
  - foul odor or drainage from the tube insertion site (where the tube enters your body)
  - increased redness, swelling or drainage from the insertion site.
- you have any questions or concerns.

## Jackson-Pratt Drainage Chart

Date	Time	Tube 1	Tube 2	Tube 3
May 11	8 a.m.	25 cc	25 cc	35 cc