

Care After Having a Drainage System Inserted

Your Procedure

A catheter (tube) has been inserted to drain fluid from a surgery incision or other area of your body. In order to place the drainage catheter, your health care provider made a hole (insertion site) in your skin.

What to Expect After Your Procedure

- It is normal to have a little soreness or tenderness at the insertion site. This should get better each day.
- Slight discomfort around the drainage catheter is normal.

Activity

- Have someone drive you home.
- You should have someone stay with you or be available to help you for 12 hours after the procedure.
- Rest for the remainder of the day.
- Do not do any strenuous activity or exercise until after the drainage catheter is removed.
- Avoid activities that cause pulling on the tube.
- Return to your normal activities as you feel able. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.

Your Health Care Provider

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Food and Beverages

- Return to your normal diet. Follow any instructions your health care provider gave you.
- If you feel nauseated, drink clear liquids until you feel better.

Pain Relief

- Take your usual medicines (including pain medicine). Follow your health care provider's instructions.

Bathing

- Keep the catheter insertion site clean and dry.
- Do not take a bath or swim until the drainage catheter is removed. (This may take several weeks.)
- You may take a shower while the bandage is on. Cover the bandages with plastic wrap before your shower. Remove the plastic wrap after your shower.
- Change the bandages if they get wet.

(over)

Drainage Tube and Bag

- It is important to keep the fluid draining.
- Do not let the tubing kink.
- To empty the fluid into the collection bag, press down on the suction device on the container. This will dump the fluid into the bag and reapply suction to the drainage catheter.
- Get a new bag when it is one-half full before it is uncomfortable and pulling.

How to Irrigate the Drainage Catheter

- Irrigate the drainage catheter once a day or as directed by your health care provider.
- Wash your hands before you begin.
- Disconnect the clear plastic tubing from the white drainage catheter.
- Connect the saline-filled syringe to the drainage catheter. Slowly push the saline into the drainage catheter. Some resistance is normal, but do not use force when pushing.
- Remove the syringe.
- Reconnect the clear plastic tubing to the white drainage catheter.
- Press down on the suction device or container to reapply the suction.
- Throw away the irrigation syringe.

How to Change the Dressing

- Change your dressing every 3 days or sooner if it becomes soiled or wet. Do not use anything sharp (like scissors) near your catheter.
- Remove the old dressings. Be careful not to pull on the catheter.
- Throw away the old bandages.
- Wash the skin around the tube with warm water. You may use a mild soap. Rinse the area and pat dry.
- Cut a 2-inch slit into the center of a 4-inch by 4-inch gauze sponge. Place the sponge around the tube and on top of the tube holder.
- Apply another 4-inch by 4-inch gauze sponge over the tubing. Be careful not to kink the tubing.
- Tape the dressings in place like a frame.

When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you have any of the following:

- increased pain or discomfort around the drainage catheter
- bleeding around the drainage catheter
- pain, swelling, redness or drainage at the insertion site
- no drainage from the catheter
- unable to irrigate the tube
- chills or a temperature of 101 F or higher
- any questions or concerns.