

Caring for Your Drain

A surgical drain is placed under a wound. It helps remove fluid from the surgery area. Your surgeon can tell you how long they think you will have your drain.

If you are sent home with 1 or more drains, you will need to take care of it until it is removed. You need to empty the drain and measure its contents. Your surgeon wants you to keep a record of the amount of drainage. There are record keeping sheets at the end of this handout. Fill them out each day and bring them to your follow-up visits with your doctor.

Your nurse can teach you how to care for the drain before you go home.

Supplies you need

- Measuring cup
- Daily Drain Record – found at the end of this handout
- 4" x 4" or 2" x 2" split gauze dressings - if the drain is rubbing on your clothes

How to care for your drain

Check and empty each drain 2 to 3 times a day, or as instructed by your doctor or nurse. Each time you empty the drain, write the date and the drainage amount on the **Daily Drain Record**. If you have more than 1 drain, write the drainage amounts on a separate line for each drain.

Drains come in many sizes and shapes. The next few pages explain how to care for drains and list problems to call your doctor about.

Other things you should know

- Ask your doctor or nurse to explain what color your drainage should be. Drainage color varies based on the type of drain that is placed.
- Clean drain sites once a day with soap and water. Cover with split gauze as needed. Look at your skin when you clean the drain site.
- Call your doctor if you have any of the problems listed on the next page.

Call your surgeon right away if you have any of these problems:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- Swelling, warmth, drainage or pain around your drain site
- Increased redness that spreads out from your drain site.
It is normal to see a little redness where the drain tubing and stitches enter your skin.
- Sudden increase or decrease in the amount of drainage over a 24 hour period
- Sudden increase in the amount of bright red bloody drainage, or no drainage at all
- Thick, cloudy or bad smelling drainage
- Your drain falls out
- Your drain does not maintain suction, meaning the Jackson-Pratt or Accordion drain will not stay flat or the Davol drain balloon will not stay inflated
- Questions or other concerns



Your Doctor: _____ at _____

Your Nurse: _____ at _____

This info is a general resource. It is not meant to replace your doctor's advice.
Ask your doctor or health care team any questions. Always follow their instructions.

Daily Drain Record

Check and empty your drain 3 times a day. Each time, write down the date, time and amount of drainage below. Add up all the drainage for the day and write it in the daily total box. Bring this sheet to your first follow-up office visit.

Date	Drain 1	Drain 2	Drain 3	Drain 4	Drain 5	Drain 6
<i>Example:</i>						
<i>Morning 5/26/15</i>	<i>50 ml</i>	<i>75 ml</i>	<i>60 ml</i>	<i>100 ml</i>	<i>50 ml</i>	<i>125 ml</i>
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						

Daily Drain Record

Check and empty your drain 3 times a day. Each time, write down the date, time and amount of drainage below. Add up all the drainage for the day and write it in the daily total box. Bring this sheet to your first follow-up office.

Date	Drain 1	Drain 2	Drain 3	Drain 4	Drain 5	Drain 6
<i>Example:</i>						
<i>Morning 5/26/15</i>	<i>50 ml</i>	<i>75 ml</i>	<i>60 ml</i>	<i>100 ml</i>	<i>50 ml</i>	<i>125 ml</i>
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						
Daily total						

Follow the steps for the type of drain marked by your nurse.

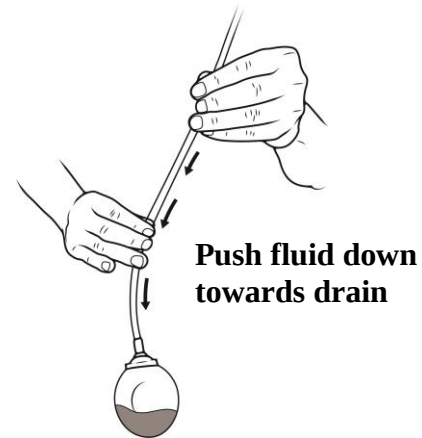
☐ To empty your Jackson-Pratt drain (bulb type)

When you empty a Jackson-Pratt drain, you also need to massage the drain tubing with your fingers to help keep it clear of blood clots. This process is called **stripping**. Step 2 explains how to strip your drain tubing.

1. Gather your supplies. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. Dry hands with a clean towel.

2. To strip the drain:

Use 2 fingers to hold the drain tubing near your skin. Hold the tubing firmly to keep from pulling it out. Pinch the tubing with 2 fingers from your other hand. Slide those fingers down the tubing towards the bulb and release them when you get to the end. Then let go of the tubing near your skin.



3. Unplug the stopper on top of the drain. Turn the drain upside down and gently squeeze the drain to empty the fluid into a measuring cup.
4. Squeeze the drain flat in your hand. Replace the stopper while the drain is flat to restart suction.
5. Write the amount of drainage on your **Daily Drain Record**. Look at the drainage. If the drainage smells bad or if it is cloudy or bright red, call your doctor's office.
6. Put drainage in the toilet and rinse out the measuring cup.
7. Wash and dry your hands.

Jackson-Pratt drain

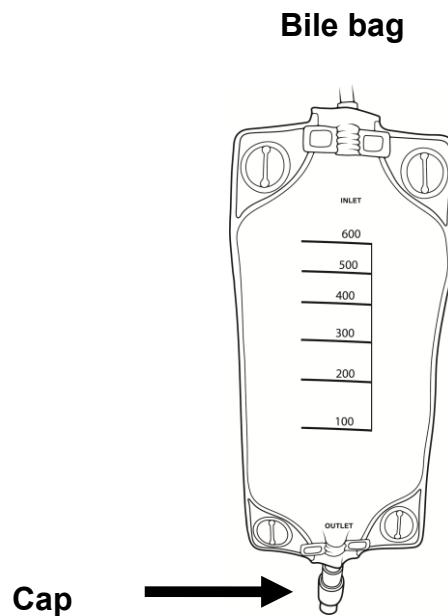
Stopper →



Follow the steps for the type of drain marked by your nurse.

☐ **To empty your Bile bag drain (flat type)**

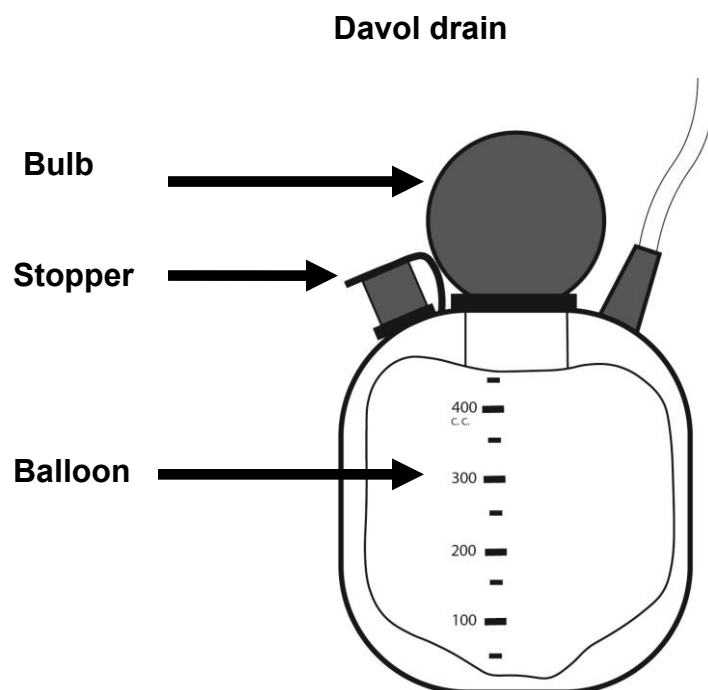
1. Gather your supplies. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. Dry hands with clean towel.
2. Twist cap at bottom of drainage bag to the **open** position or remove the cap.
3. Empty the fluid into a measuring cup.
4. Twist cap at bottom of drainage bag to the **closed** position or replace the cap.
5. Write the amount of drainage on the **Daily Drain Record**. Look at the drainage. If the drainage smells bad or if it is cloudy or bright red, call your doctor's office.
6. Put drainage in the toilet and rinse out the measuring cup.
7. Wash and dry your hands.



Follow the steps for the type of drain marked by your nurse.

☐ To empty your Davol drain (flat type with balloon)

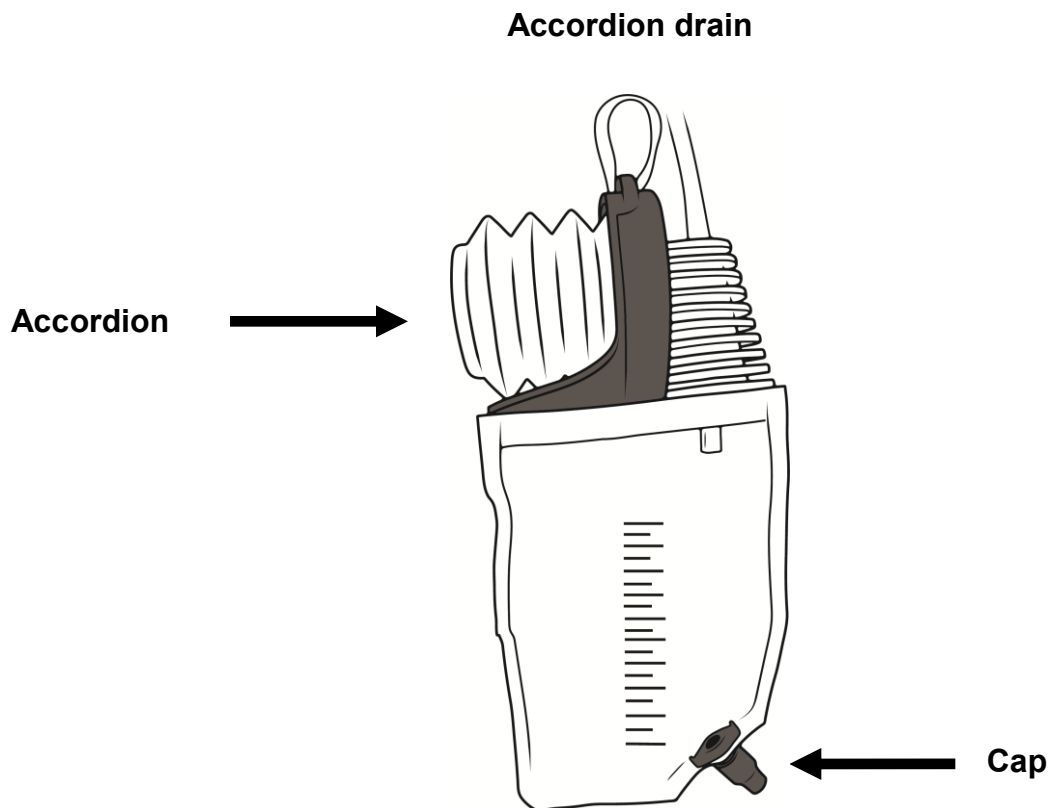
1. Gather your supplies. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. Dry hands with clean towel.
2. Unplug the stopper on top of the drain.
3. Turn the drain upside down and empty the fluid into a measuring cup.
4. Steady the drain using the hand on the same side as your drain.
5. With your other hand, squeeze and release bulb quickly until balloon is inflated and fills the inside of the drain.
6. Replace the stopper while the balloon is inflated to restart suction.
7. Write the amount of drainage on the **Daily Drain Record**. Look at the drainage. If the drainage smells bad or if it is cloudy or bright red, call your doctor's office.
8. Put drainage in the toilet and rinse out the measuring cup.
9. Wash and dry your hands.



Follow the steps for the type of drain that is marked by your nurse.

☐ **To empty your Accordion drain (flat type with accordion valve)**

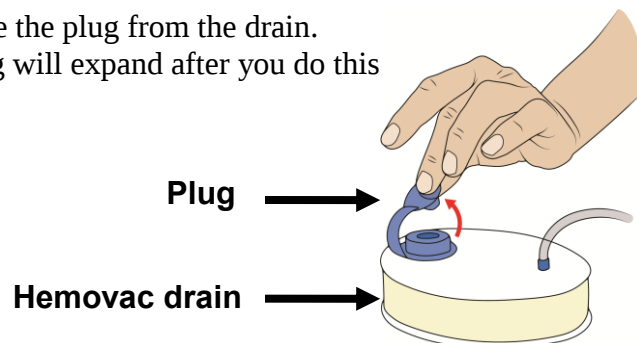
1. Gather your supplies. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. Dry hands with clean towel.
2. Twist cap at bottom of drainage bag to the **open** position.
3. Empty the fluid into a measuring cup.
4. Twist cap at bottom of drainage bag to the **closed** position.
5. Squeeze the accordion flat to restart suction.
6. Write the amount of drainage on the **Daily Drain Record**. Look at the drainage. If the drainage smells bad or if it is cloudy or bright red, call your doctor's office.
7. Put drainage in the toilet and rinse out the measuring cup.
8. Wash and dry your hands.



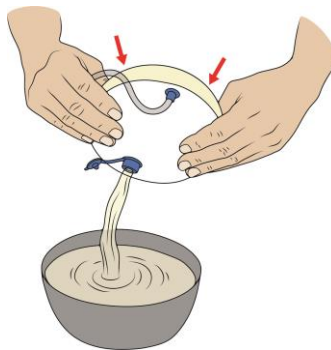
□ To empty your Hemovac drain

1. Gather your supplies. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. Dry hands with clean towel.

2. Remove the plug from the drain.
The bag will expand after you do this



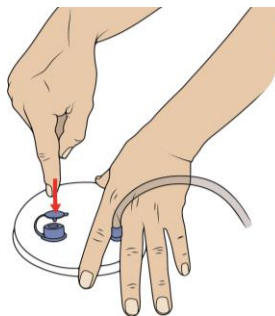
3. Turn the drain over and empty the fluid into a measuring cup.



4. Set the drain on a flat surface and use 1 hand to press down on the drain.

5. Once the drain is flat, use your other hand to replace the plug.

The drain needs to be flat for it to work.



6. Write the amount of drainage on the **Daily Drain Record**. Look at the drainage. If the drainage smells bad or if it is cloudy or bright red, call your doctor's office.
7. Put drainage in the toilet and rinse out the measuring cup.
8. Wash and dry your hands.