



Care of Surgical Drains

1. Depending on your procedure you may be sent home with one or more drains. Multiple drains should be labeled separately (#1, #2, etc.) and drainage should be recorded individually. A drain is generally removed when the 24 hour drainage is less than 25 ml (or cc) for 2 days.
2. Your hospital nurses will teach you how to empty and care for your drains before you are discharged from the hospital.
3. Drains should be emptied at the same hour in the morning and evening each day and recorded on the drainage record provided. It doesn't matter which hour is selected (for example 7am and 7pm or 11am and 11pm), but you need to be consistent so you are recording 12 hours of drainage each time.
4. You should strip the drain tubes twice a day to maintain flow. To do this: firmly pinch the drain near the body and keep from pulling on the exit site. With the other hand pinch the tubing and pull along the tubing away from the body. Your nurse in the hospital will show you how to strip the drains. Do not attempt to clean the bulb or detach the bulb from the tubing.
5. If the drain should fall out, cover the site with antibiotic ointment and a sterile dressing and call the office. Do not attempt to reinsert the drain tube.
6. Bring the drainage record with you to your appointments. If you have multiple drains, one drain may be ready to be removed before another drain.
7. Support the drains so that they do not hang or pull on your skin. You can use a lanyard, a pocket, or a safety pin to your clothing.