

How to Care for Your Jackson-Pratt Drain

Caring for the JP drain is easy. To prevent body fluid from collecting near the surgical site, the drain pulls this fluid (by suction) into a bulb. The bulb should be emptied when it is half full. The amount of drainage may vary depending on your movement. If you have more than one drain, mark each with a number and record amount from each drain separately. As your wound heals, the fluid changes to light pink, light yellow, or clear.

How to empty the drain: (Do this at least every 8 hours)

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water. Have disposable cup ready.
2. Remove plug from the pouring spout and allow the bulb to fill with air.
3. Look at how much drainage is in each bulb using the calibrations on the side of the bulb to measure how much fluid you collected (if amount falls between lines, estimate). Write amount of drainage under the date and time of day you collected it, on the JP drainage chart provided.
4. Turn bulb upside down over the cup; gently squeeze emptying fluid into disposable cup.
5. When empty, squeeze the bulb in your hand until flat, then replace the plug into the port. The bulb should stay flat after it is plugged so that the vacuum suction can restart.
6. Discard the fluid in the toilet and flush. Wash your hands

“Milking” The Tubing: (Do this every 2 hours while awake)

1. With one hand, pinch the tubing as close to the skin as possible.
2. With a wet washcloth or alcohol swab, pinch the tubing and slide toward the bulb, pushing the fluid in the bulb.

How to care for the skin and the drain site:

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water.
2. Remove the dressing from around the drain. Use soap and water and gently clean the drain site and the skin around it. Clean this area daily.
3. When the drain site is clean and dry, you can apply bacitracin to the site, and put a new dressing around the drain. Use paper tape on the dressing to hold it down against your skin.
4. Place the old dressing into the trash. Wash your hands.

Supporting the Drains:

Use a large safety pin to put through the loop on the drain bulb and pin to your clothes/surgical garment. When showering, use a shoelace, belt, scarf, etc. to loop through the drain and have them hang around your neck to be supported.

When to call the Doctor:

- Increased redness and/or pain at the drain site
- Swelling around the drain site or incision
- Purulent, cloudy yellow, tan, or foul-smelling drainage around the drain site or in the drain bulb
- Bleeding
- Temperature of 101.0 or greater
- The bulb will not stay compressed or fills with air
- The drain comes out

If you have questions or concerns, please call our office at 937-886-2980.