

Hepatobiliary surgical drain care



Information for patients

Hepatobiliary



What is drain care and why do I need to know how to do it?

Sometimes your doctors may decide that you are well enough to go home, but you may still need to keep your drain in place for a while at home.

Don't worry we will teach you how to look after your drain at home.

To stop your drains from pulling, don't allow your drain to become too full and use a safety pin to attach it to your clothes so that it isn't pulling on your skin.

Why do you need to measure the amount of fluid in your drain?

Whilst your drain remains in place you will need to keep a record of how much your drain is draining.

This is so your doctor has a record of how much has been draining and can see if it is OK to remove your drain (this is normally done in clinic).

How do you measure the amount of fluid in your drain?

For this we will give you a jug to empty the drain and a drain chart to record the output on.

Try to empty your drain at the same time each day as this allows the doctor to see how much has drained in 24hrs.

If it is draining a lot and you need to empty this more frequently that's fine, just remember to record each time you empty the drain.

Instructions for emptying and measuring the fluid in your drain

1. Wash your hands.
2. Place the jug, (given to you before discharge) at the tap for your drain.
3. Turn the tap clockwise to open the drain and allow the fluid to collect in the jug.
4. Turn the tap in the other direction to close the tap again. (If you forget to close the tap, you may end up with the drain leaking over you).
5. Measure how much has drained using the jug, then empty the jug down the toilet.
6. Clean the end of the drain using a tissue.
7. Rinse the jug with water and keep it ready to use the following day.
8. Wash your hands.
9. Record the time and volume on the drain chart.

What should I do if the amount of drainage increases or the colour of the drain fluid changes?

If you find that the volume from your drain has suddenly increased, or the colour has changed or the output smells, then you should contact your hospital consultant's secretary (or CNS if you have one).

You may need to come back into hospital, or come back to clinic earlier than planned.

Why do I need to flush my drain?

Sometimes the doctors will ask for your drain to be flushed each day as this can prevent it from blocking.

This is normally done 1 to 2 times a day and you will be told how frequently to do this prior to going home.

If you are told to flush your drain, you will be given all the equipment you need before leaving hospital.

If you don't feel happy to flush your drain yourself, we can show a member of your family how to do this, or we can arrange for a district nurse to visit you at home each day to flush the drain.

You will also need to keep a record of the volume draining each day. Please see previous page on how to empty and record the output from your drain.

What equipment will I need to flush my drain?

- 20ml syringe.
- Saline.
- Jug.
- Gauze or tissue.

How do I flush my drain?

1. Wash your hands.
2. Using the syringe given to you, draw up the normal saline (pull the liquid from the bottle into the syringe). When you have got the fluid in the syringe, get rid of any air that has been drawn up too.
3. Make yourself comfortable. Place some tissue/pad/gauze under the connection from the tube to the drain bag, just in case there is any leakage from the drain when you disconnect the bag.
4. Disconnect the drain bag. Depending on the drain, this may need unscrewing or may just pull apart. (Your nurse will advise you before you are discharged).
5. Attach the syringe at the connection point to the drain bag. Slowly inject the fluid into your drain. You should be able to do this easily without any resistance. Your drain needs to be flushed with 20ml each day.
6. Now disconnect the syringe from the tube and reconnect the drain bag.
7. Throw away the syringe and tissue, then wash your hands.

When will my follow-up appointment be?

You will be advised by the consultant or the team when to expect your appointment, prior to discharge.

Sometimes it may not be possible to give you an exact time prior to discharge. You may receive either a telephone call or letter with the exact date and time, after you have left hospital.

What should I do if I have any concerns about my drain before my next clinic visit?

Monday to Friday

Call your district nurse if you have been allocated one.

If you have an allocated CNS, please call them for advice.

Otherwise, please call the ward you were discharged from or your consultants secretary, via the Northern General Hospital Switchboard:

- **0114 243 4343**

Out of hours and weekends

You can call the district nursing team out of hours team, if you are currently being visited by a member of their team.

Otherwise contact your GP out of hours service or call 111 and they will be able to advise you.

They may have to arrange for you to attend the hospital for a review.



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