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DRAIN CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Drains are used with many surgeries (i.e. mastectomy, hernias, axillary dissections, etc)

WHAT IS A DRAIN FOR?

- A drain is placed to remove excess fluid that builds up under skin flaps or in empty spaces created by the surgery
- You will drain the largest amounts of fluid the first few days after surgery and then the amount will taper off
- The drain will be in for one to two weeks

DRAIN CARE:

- Remove outer dressing at 24 hours post op and shower.
- Keep clean with routine hygiene.
- If you develop drainage around the tubing, place 4"x 4" gauze around it and hold in place with tape. Change as needed to keep gauze dry.

EMPTYING DRAIN:

- Wash your hands thoroughly before you start.
- Hold the bulb in an upright position with one hand and take the cap off with the other hand.
- With the bulb in one hand and the small measuring cup (received from hospital) in the other, turn the bulb over and gently squeeze into cup or if you did not receive a cup use the measurement on the bulb itself. Squeeze the 'grenade' and replace topper to continue suction.
- Once you have a measurement, record it on your drainage chart (see below).
- Measure drainage in CCs and not ounces.
- Discard the drainage into the toilet and flush.
- Rinse the cup so it is clean and ready to use the next time.
- Wash your hands.
- Re-pin your drain to your clothing. Drain should be lower than your incision.
- Be sure to bring your Drainage Chart to your post-op visit.

HOW OFTEN TO EMPTY THE DRAIN?

- Empty the drain when it is half full.
- It is typical to empty the drain 3 times a day, initially.
- You may have to empty the drain more than 3 times a day.
- As drainage tapers off, you may only need to empty the drain once a day.

WHAT COLOR SHOULD DRAINAGE BE?

- Color will vary. Typically will start out red, then pink, then yellow.

WHEN TO CALL OUR OFFICE:

- You develop a temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- Your drainage increases or stops suddenly.
- Your drain stitch breaks or drain comes out.
- The fluid in your drain becomes bright red, contains pus, or has a foul odor.
- You can expect your skin around the drain to become red – that is a reaction to the foreign body. The redness should be less than ½ inch around. Call our office if redness becomes wider than ½ inch around.

PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE OR THE DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

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