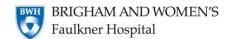
Drain Care Guide



While you are in the hospital, your nurse will care for your drains. After discharge, this is your job.

What is draining?

• Fluid that accumulates at your surgery site. This fluid will be watery red for a couple of days, but should gradually change to a straw color.

What is holding the drain in place?

• There is one stitch holding each drain in place.

What should I do with the dressing around the drain insertion site?

The bandage around the drain insertion site is called a "drain sponge". Its job is to catch any
drainage that leaks around the tube. You should change it daily, or when it is wet.

How do I care for my drain insertion site?

Gently remove any discharge from around the drain tube. Keep the insertion site as dry as possible.

Where do I put the drain bulb?

• You will be given a garment with pockets to hold the drain bulb. You can also wear your own clothes and pin the tab on the bulb to your clothes.

How do I make sure the drains are working?

• "Strip" or "milk" the tubing to release any clotty threads that accumulate. Do this at least twice a day. It is important that the bulb remain compressed and plugged at rest.

How do I empty the drains?

- Wash your hands before and after emptying a drain.
- Open the top of the bulb, and empty the contents into the cup provided.
- While compressing the sides of the bulb, close the top.
- Measure and record the fluid that comes out of each drain separately.
- Discard the fluid in the toilet and rinse the cup.

How often should I empty the drains?

At least twice a day. You should also empty the drain if it becomes over half full.

What restrictions do I have while the drains are in?

- If you had reconstruction, do not lift your arm above shoulder level until the drains are removed. If not, you may move the arm as tolerated.
- Do not use deodorant or shave your underarm on the side of the drains until they are removed.
- Do not drive with drains in.

When will the drains be removed?

A drain is ready to be removed when it shows less than 30cc in a 24 hour period for two
consecutive days. For most people, this occurs between 5 days and 2 weeks post-operatively. If
you had reconstruction, your plastic surgeon may require less than 20cc.

Call your surgeon's office when one or more drains are ready to come out. If you had reconstruction, you should call your plastic surgeon. If not, call your breast surgeon.