



*Elizabeth Bonefas, M.D., F.A.C.S.*  
General Surgery and Diseases of the Breast

## Drain Care Instructions

### Post-Operative Instructions

**Elizabeth Bonefas, M.D., F.A.C.S. and Kelly L. Birt, M.D.**

#### 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 greatest amount of fluid the first few days after surgery and then the drainage will decrease.
- The drains will be in place for one to two weeks.

#### Drain Care:

- Remove the outer dressing 24 hours after surgery and shower.
- Keep clean and dry with regular hygiene.
- If drainage leaks around the tubing, cover with gauze and secure with tape. Change this dressing as needed to keep gauze dry.
- Strip the tubing daily.
- How to Strip the Tube:
  - Using your index finger and thumb, pinch the tubing at the place that it exits your skin. This will hold the tubing in place, preventing it from being pulled out.
  - Immediately next to that pinched tubing, pinch the tubing between your other hand's index finger and thumb.
  - While keeping the tubing pinched next to your skin, slide the other hand along the tubing towards the bulb, keeping firm pressure while sliding. This will stretch the tubing although it will not break.

#### Emptying Drain:

- Wash your hands before you start.
- Holding the bulb in an upright position with one hand, take the cap off with the other hand.
- Using the measurement cup sent home with you from the hospital, turn bulb over and squeeze fluid from the bulb, measure fluid and record amount on the chart provided below. If you do not have this cup, read the measurements directly on the bulb. Squeezing the bulb, replace the topper to continue suction.
- Be sure to record your drainage on the drainage sheet. Discard the drainage into the toilet and flush. Rinse cup so that it is clean and ready for the next time.
- Wash your hands.
- Re-pin to your clothing. It needs to be lower than your incision.
- Be sure to bring your drainage chart to your post-op visit.



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**How Often Do I Empty The Drain?**

- Empty the drain if it becomes half full.
- Most patients will empty their drains 2-3 times per day.
- Sometimes you may have to empty more than 3 times per day.
- As drainage tapers you may only empty once per day.

**What Color Will The Drainage Be?**

- It will vary. Usually it starts out red to pink and then yellow.

**When To Call Our Office:**

- If you develop a temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- If your drainage increases or stops suddenly and stripping the tubing does not resume drainage.
- If your drain stitch breaks or the drain comes out.
- If the fluid in your drain becomes bright red, pus, or has a foul odor.
- You can expect the skin around the drain to become red. If the redness is greater than ½ inch around, you should call the office.

**DRAINAGE (Bring to your post-op visits)**

**DRAIN#1**

Date	Time	Amount

**DRAIN #2**

Date	Time	Amount



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**DRAIN #3**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Amount</b>

**Please call our office with any questions or concerns at 713-756-8555.**