



USF Breast Health

DRAIN CARE:

What is the drain for?

Your drain is in place to prevent fluid from building up under the skin after an operation. It also helps your incision to heal. Your doctor will take the drain out when the wound produces less than 30cc of fluid per day for 2 consecutive days.

What Supplies do I need?

- A medicine cup for the fluid to run into and to be able to measure the fluid.
- The chart to record the amount of fluid.
- 4" X 4" gauze and tape
- Safety pin
- Soft ribbon or rope for the shower.

How do I empty the drain?

- Wash your hands very well before you start. This is important to prevent infection.
- Hold the plastic 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 medicine cup in the other, turn the open bulb over and empty the fluid into the cup by squeezing the bulb gently, squirting the fluid into the cup.
- To "recharge" the bulb, squeeze the bulb tightly side to side with one hand, and recap it with the other hand. This applies the suction again inside of the bulb. Do not squeeze the bulb if the cap is on.
- Record all amounts of drainage that you empty from the bulb.
- After recording the amounts, discard the drainage into the toilet.
- Rinse the medicine cup so it is clean and ready to be used again the next time you empty the bulb.
- Wash your hands again after tending the drains.
- Re-pin the tape tab of the bulb to your blouse, not your pants or skirt, or place the bulb into the camisole packet.
- For a shower, the bulb tube may be pinned to a soft ribbon or rope worn as a necklace.





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How often do I need to empty my drain?

Usually you empty the drain when it is half full. Most find they need to empty the drain 3 times a day when you wake up in the morning, mid day and before bed. If the bulb fills up more than this, you may need to empty the drain more often. Keeping the bulb as empty and collapsed as possible helps the drainage to stop faster, so more frequent emptying may be helpful in allowing drain removal sooner.

How much drainage should there be?

The amount of drainage may vary from day to day. It should be less each day. If you increase your activity, it may increase the amount of drainage.

What color should the drainage be?

The color will vary. It will change from bright red to pink, and to yellow.

What do I do with my drainage record?

Bring it to your follow-up visit.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your doctor if:

- You have an elevated temperature.
- The drainage increases or stops suddenly
- The drain stitches come loose or break, or if the drain comes out.
- The area on your skin around the drain gets red, swollen or painful.
- The fluid coming out of the drain changes (has pus in it, becomes bright red, or has a bad smell)



