



## **Drain Care**

After many surgical procedures such as mastectomy or removal of the axillary lymph nodes, you can expect to go home with at least one drain in place. A drain is used to make sure that your surgical site does not collect the fluid the body normally produces after an operation. There are some basic steps that you need to follow so that you will be free of problems until you see your surgeon in the office. The drain is usually removed during the first post-operative visit.

- Be aware of the drain at all times, especially during active periods. Keep the drain attached to your clothing with a drain clip or safety pin. The drain should be lower than your incision at all times.
- Observe your drain several times during the day. Make sure it has not moved out of position (dislodged). Inspect the dressing for any signs of leakage or spotting of blood. If this happens, call your surgeon's office.
- Empty the drain container at least once a day. Pick the same time each day. Empty the fluid into the measuring cup given to you before you leave the hospital. Measure and record the amount of fluid as instructed by your surgeon. Some surgeons request that you measure and record the amount of fluid two times each day. Your surgeon will give you specific instructions.
- If the amount of fluid has increased significantly or if you find that you need to empty your container more than two times in one day, contact your surgeon's office by phone.
- Guard against pulling on the drain tubes. Keep them free of restrictions. Also reinforce or change your dressing on the surgical site as instructed by your surgeon.

### **Follow These Steps for Emptying Your Drain Container(s):**

1. Wash your hands.
2. Have the plastic measuring cup from the hospital ready to collect and measure the drainage.
3. Detach the drain from your clothing.
4. Standing or sitting over the measuring cup, open the plastic tab to the pour spout. You will feel the container "give way".
5. Carefully pour the contents into the measuring cup.
6. Squeeze or press the side of the container (to remove all the air from the drain). This will create a suction to remove the fluids from the body.
7. Close the plastic tab on the spout while the sides are compressed (pressed together). If you are unable to keep the sides of the container compressed, contact your surgeon's office.
8. Measure and record the amount of fluid as instructed. *Please use the drain flow sheet on the next page.* Then discard fluid by flushing it down the toilet and wash your hands.
9. Reattach the drain to your clothing to avoid accidentally pulling it out.



**Patient Information and Education**  
 School of Medicine and Hospitals Center

**Drain Flow Sheet**

<b>Week 1</b>		<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Drain Site 1</b>	<b>AM</b>							
	<b>PM</b>							
	<b>Total:</b>							
<b>Drain Site 2 (if needed)</b>	<b>AM</b>							
	<b>PM</b>							
	<b>Total:</b>							
<b>Week 2</b>		<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Drain Site 1</b>	<b>AM</b>							
	<b>PM</b>							
	<b>Total:</b>							
<b>Drain Site 2 (if needed)</b>	<b>AM</b>							
	<b>PM</b>							
	<b>Total:</b>							
<b>Week 3</b>		<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Drain Site 1</b>	<b>AM</b>							
	<b>PM</b>							
	<b>Total:</b>							
<b>Drain Site 2 (if needed)</b>	<b>AM</b>							
	<b>PM</b>							
	<b>Total:</b>							