

# **Using a Suction Drain**

#### What is a suction drain?

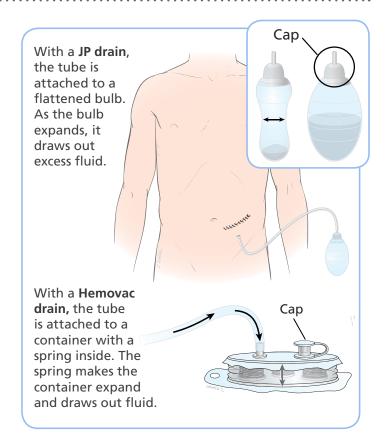
A **suction drain** is a device that gently pulls excess fluid from your body. It's used to stop fluid build up after surgery or if you have an infection.

One end of the suction drain tube is inserted in the area of your body where the fluid is building up. The other end is attached to a squeezable container that is flattened. As the container expands, it draws out the excess fluids. The suction drain will stay in place until the amount of fluid slows or stops.

Two common types of suction drains are the **JP drain** and the **Hemovac drain** (see pictures at right).

# When should I check my drain?

Check the amount of fluid in the container every 2 to 4 hours. Empty it when the container is half full, or every 8 hours, whichever comes first. As you heal, you'll need to empty it less often. Follow the steps in the box below.





# How do I empty my suction drain?

- **1** Set out your supplies, including a measuring cup, an alcohol wipe, and a pen or pencil.
- **2** Wash your hands with soap and water.
- **3** Remove the cap, or open the plug of the container. Do not touch the inside of the cap or plug.
- 4 Pour the fluid from the drain container into the measuring cup.
- **5** Clean the cap or plug of the drain with an alcohol wipe.
- 6 Squeeze the drain container, and hold it flat. While it's flat, put the cap or plug back on. If you can't squeeze it flat and close it at the same time, ask someone for help.
- 7 Measure and record how much fluid you collected. Write down the date, time, and amount of fluid. A record chart is on page 2 of this fact sheet. Be sure to bring the record to your next appointment.
- 8 Flush the fluid down the toilet. Rinse the measuring cup. Wash your hands with soap and water.

# How do I keep the drain area clean?

The area where the drain tubing enters your body needs to stay clean to prevent infection. **Change the dressing over the area every day.** Follow these steps:

- 1 Wash your hands with soap and water.
- **2** Remove the dressing, and throw it away.
- **3 Clean the area** with an alcohol wipe or with saline solution.
- **4 Check for signs of infection** (listed at right). If you see any of these, contact your healthcare provider.
- **5** Place new dressing around the tubing.
- **6** Tape the tubing in place against your skin.
- **7** Wash your hands with soap and water.
- **8 Secure the drain** to the dressing or your clothes. Use a safety pin through a tag, or tape around the tube (don't put the pin through the tube).

### When should I call for help?

Contact your healthcare provider if you experience any of the following:

- Signs of infection, including:
  - Increased redness, pain, or swelling
  - Fever greater than 101° F (38.4° C)
  - Cloudy, yellow, or bad-smelling drainage
- Trouble with the drain, including:
  - The container will not stay flat after you recap it.
  - The tubing is clogged.
  - The amount of drainage increases suddenly, or fluid leaks onto your skin.
  - The tubing comes out of your skin or comes unhooked from the container.
  - The stitches holding the tubing in place come out.

Use these charts to record how much fluid you collect. **If you have more than one suction drain, use a separate chart for each one.** 

Date	Time	Amount

Date	Time	Amount

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