

Caring for your Drains

- You may have one or more “hand grenade,” or bulb shaped drains, sometimes called Jackson-Pratt drains (JPs), placed during surgery. These drains prevent fluid buildup and blood collections from occurring in the surgical area. You will require a medication measuring cup so that you can empty and measure the drain contents in milliliters (ml) or cubic centimeters (cc). You will need to empty, measure and record the drainage every 12 hours. Do not permit the bulb to fill over the halfway point.
- Be careful not to touch the opening of the drain with your fingers or to the edge of the measuring cup. Empty the contents into the measuring cup and note the amount. **DO NOT MEASURE IN OUNCES.**
- Squeeze the bulb from the sides only and recap with the drain plug. Discard the contents of the drain into the toilet.
- Repeat this process for all drains.
- Record the time, amount of drainage (cc) and which drain was emptied (for example, left or right, breast or abdomen). You can get a drain record from our website under Patient Resources.
- Pin the bulb to your girdle, binder or clothing. Be sure to unpin the bulb when undressing. Hold the drains to prevent them from pulling out.
- You may shower with the drains in place if the plastic dressing is intact. Be sure to support the drain bulb so that they do not hang directly from the tubing or the drains may pull out. You can support the drain during showers by attaching them to a necklace or lanyard around your neck.
- When the drains are draining less than 30 cc in a 24-hour period for two consecutive days call the office to schedule removal.
- You may notice some thick or even solid material within the drain. This is normal. We recommend trying to milk this material out of the tube using an alcohol swab and pinching the tube near where it comes out of the skin.
- If you have any questions, our office is available to assist you. Call us if you need help at: **210-499-5900.**