

Care of Wound Drainage Bags

1. When a person has a wound drain, it is important for you to know what to observe and when and how to empty the device correctly. Preventing infection is your main concern.
2. Wash your hands for 15 seconds, rinse and dry.
3. You will need the following equipment for a Jackson Pratt or Hemovac drain:
 - a. Measuring cup
 - b. Clean disposable gloves
 - c. Gauze dressings
 - d. Tape
 - e. Alcohol swabs
 - f. Safety pin or clip
 - g. Plastic trash bag
 - h. Waterproof pad
 - i. Care diary
4. Take your time. Help the person lie down comfortably in bed so that you can easily look at the wound and drain.
5. Hang the plastic grocery bag on the end of a chair or night stand, or open it on an easy to reach surface.
6. Un- pin the drain from the person's clothing. Remove their clothing or night clothes if necessary to expose just the drain and wound area. Cover other body parts with a light sheet or blanket.
7. Place the waterproof pad under the drainage bag. Sit the measuring cup on the pad.
8. Put on the pair of clean gloves.
9. If there is a gauze dressing over the drain site, remove one layer of dressing carefully at a time and look to see if there is drainage on the gauze. Note the color and amount. Is there a foul odor?
10. Sometimes a dressing is placed under the drain as well as over the drain. Remove one layer at a time so as not to accidentally remove the drain.
11. Look at the drainage system and drain insertion site.
 - a. There might be slight swelling but the skin should be the same color as the rest of the area.
 - b. If there is an infection at the site you will see redness, swelling, or drainage.
 - c. Are there stitches around the drain and are they in place?
12. Also observe for drainage moving through the tubing. Make sure tubing is not kinked and allows fluid to drain freely. Check for leaks or kinks in the system.
If there is drainage where the drain enters the skin, or there is odor or the drainage tubing is leaking - call the doctor immediately.
13. **Change the dressing.** If the incision is covered with gauze, this is a good time to change the dressing (Follow doctors orders for frequency of a dressing change):
 - a. Remove gloves and place in the trash bag. Wash your hands.
 - b. Put on another pair of clean gloves.

- c. Place clean gauze dressings under and around the drain insertion site and secure with tape.
 - d. Place all used dressings in the prepared trash bag.
 - e. After you change the dressing, remove the gloves and wash your hands again.
 - f. See our lesson on changing a gauze dressing
14. Empty the drainage device:
- a. **Jackson Pratt:**
 - i. Open the plug on the side of the bulb.
 - ii. Hold the bulb below the wound so drainage does not flow back to the wound.
 - iii. Pour the drainage from the tip of the bulb into the measuring cup. Do not touch the tip of the plug with the cup or anything else. Set the cup aside.
 - iv. Cleanse the plug with an alcohol swab.
 - v. Squeeze the bulb tightly and replace the plug snugly. Never squeeze the bulb if the plug is in place. Position the bulb below the wound site. Secure the wound drainage device with a safety pin or clip on the person's clothes
 - b. **Hemovac Drain:**
 - i. To empty a Hemovac drain, open the plug on the port designated for emptying the drainage container.
 - ii. Keep the container below the wound.
 - iii. Tilt the container in the direction of the plug. Slowly empty the drainage into the measuring cup.
 - iv. You might have to squeeze the 2 flat surfaces together while pouring the drainage into the cup. Try to not spill the drainage.
 - v. Do not touch the tip of the port with the cup or anything else.
 - vi. Once the drain is empty, wipe off the port with an alcohol swab.
 - vii. Place the container on a flat surface with the port facing upward. Use one hand and squeeze the top of the container toward the flat surface until the top and bottom of the container come in contact. With the drain pressed together replace the plug.
 - viii. Place the Hemovac below the wound site. Secure the drainage device with a safety pin or clip on to the person's clothes.
15. Measure the drainage in the measuring cup and remember the amount to record in your care diary once you are finished.
16. Pour the drainage carefully into the toilet. Lower the measuring cup into the toilet and pour out the drainage to avoid splashing. You might want to wear a pair of glasses as you pour the drainage so it does not splash into your eyes. Flush the toilet twice.
17. Place soiled dressings in the plastic bag. Remove the gloves and place them in the plastic bag. If necessary place the bag into a second bag, to double bag.
18. Wash the measuring cup with soapy warm water. If you plan to reuse the cup, it is best to wash it in the dishwasher for a cycle.

19. Wash your hands
20. Observe the drainage system. Ensure the vacuum was reestablished and system is intact.
21. Write down the amount of drainage, its color and description of odor in your care diary.