

My JACKSON-PRATT (JP) DRAIN

WHAT'S A JP DRAIN?

A JP drain is a type of drain that is put into a wound during a surgery to help remove blood and fluid. *This drain is made up of three parts (as seen in figure 1):*

- The bulb, which when squeezed tightly helps to suck the fluid out of the wound. The bulb also holds the fluid until it can be emptied;
- The drainage plug, which when closed helps to keep the suction pressure needed to suck the fluid out of the wound. When the plug is removed, it allows you to dump the fluid out of the bulb, and;
- The tube, which connects the bulb to the inside of your body. Fluid in the surgical wound is sucked up the tube and is moved through the tube into the bulb.

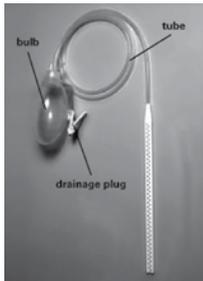


Figure 1: A JP Drain

A JP drain is temporary and is used until the amount of blood and fluid being created within your surgical wound slows down enough to let your wound to heal.

When the JP drain is collecting less than 30cc (1oz.) of fluid in 24hours (unless otherwise directed by your surgeon), the JP drain is taken out by a nurse or doctor. This is done by taking out any stitches that are holding the tube in place, and then pulling the tube out. This can be uncomfortable, so consider taking pain medication at least 30 minutes before this procedure.

The fluid in the JP drain will change color as the wound ages and as the amount of fluid decreases. It is normal to see the drain collect red blood in the beginning. Over time the color of the fluid will turn pink and finally yellow. It is also normal to see blood clots in the tubing.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Call your health care provider IMMEDIATELY if you have redness or swelling around where the tube exits your body, increased pain, bleeding around the tube exit site, a fever for more than four hours, drainage in the bulb that looks or smells like pus, if your bulb will not stay compressed, and/or if the drain comes out by accident.



For more information on Jackson-Pratt Drain,
and for community resources, go to:

swrwoundcareprogram.ca



South West Regional Wound Care Program
c/o Crystal McCallum, RN MCISc
South West Community Care Access Centre
Seaforth, Ontario N0K 1W0
E-mail: crystal.mccallum@sw.ccac-ont.ca

“MY
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Tips on how to care
for you or your
loved one's JP drain





COMMON QUESTIONS

If you see clots in the tubing it is important that you 'strip' the tubing.

To 'strip' the tubing:

- Hold the tube near where it enters your skin with one of your hands. This steadies the tubing so that you don't accidentally pull it out when you strip it;
- Use the index finger and thumb of your opposite hand to squeeze the tubing from just below where it is inserted into the skin (and where your other hand is), down towards the bulb. Repeat this as many times as needed until you see the clots in the line move, and;
- Once you have 'stripped' the tubing down to the bulb, let go of the tubing near where it enters your skin.

It is wise to strip your tubing each time you empty your drain to keep clots from forming.

HOW DO I EMPTY MY JP DRAIN?

To keep your drain from being pulled out accidentally, pin your JP drain to your clothes using a large safety pin. This safety pin should be placed through the plastic loop on the top of the JP bulb. The drain must be pinned to a spot that is lower than the wound itself. Be careful NOT to puncture the drain or yourself, and ensure there is slack in the tubing to let you to move freely! Pinning the drain may also make the drain feel more comfortable, especially where it exits from your body. To care for your JP drain at home (in addition to 'stripping' the drain tubing), you will need to empty your drain and change your drain dressing.

To empty the drain:

- Gather your supplies: measuring cup, syringe or small medicine cup for measuring small amounts of fluid, and pencil and paper;
- Wash your hands with soap and water. Rinse your hands well, and towel them dry (use a clean towel or paper towel);
- Unpin the drain from your clothes;
- Remove the drain plug from the bulb and pour the fluid from the bulb into your measuring container. Empty the bulb the best you can. Try not to let the opening of the bulb touch the inside of your measuring container;
- With one hand, squeeze as much of the air as you can out of the bulb. While you are still squeezing the bulb, replace the drain plug. Your drain should be flat in the middle (this makes the suction);
- Pin the drain back onto your clothes;
- Measure the amount of fluid that was emptied out of your drain (use a syringe or small medicine cup to measure small amounts). Record the amount of drainage on a piece of paper. Give this record of your drain output to your healthcare provider when you see them next;
- Rinse the measuring equipment out with warm soapy water, and wash your hands again.

The drain should be emptied at least twice a day (at breakfast and bedtime) and when the bulb is fully expanded, or as directed by your surgeon.

HOW DO I CHANGE MY JP DRESSING?

If you, a family member, friend or neighbor is capable of changing your JP dressing, you will be taught to do so. It is important that you change the dressing as instructed. The most commonly used JP dressing is a simple dry gauze dressing. Such dressings are changed once a day and when the dressing leaks through or falls off.

To put on a dry gauze dressing:

- Gather your supplies: clean medical gloves, a package of pre-cut drain sponge (4" x 4", one package has two pieces of gauze in it), two packages of sterile gauze (4" x 4"), medical tape, and a cleaning agent (i.e. alcohol swab, hydrogen peroxide, chlorhexidine swab stick, sterile water—it depends on your surgeon's preference/order);
- Wash your hands with soap and water. Rinse your hands well, and towel them dry (use a clean towel or paper towel);
- Put on a pair of clean medical gloves;
- Remove the old dressing carefully by removing the tape first, followed by the gauze dressing pieces. Throw all pieces of the old dressing in the garbage;
- Remove your gloves, and apply a new clean pair;
- Clean around the drain exit site (where the drain comes out of your body) using the cleaning solution ordered by your surgeon. Clean from where the drain enters your skin, outwards. Allow the area to air dry;
- Open your package of sterile drain sponges and separate the two sponges. Put one of the sponges around the drain and the second around the drain in the opposite direction. This keeps the dressing from slipping;
- Cover the drain site with a layer of sterile 4" x 4" gauze, and tape the dressing edges in place.