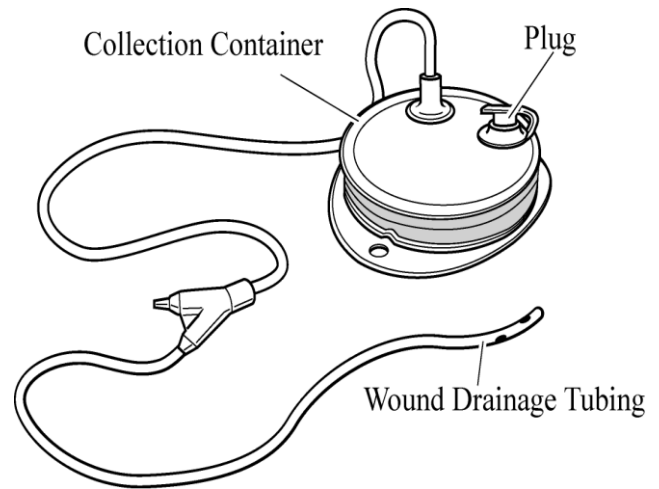


# Home Care for Your Wound Drain

When you go home after surgery, you may have one or more drains in place to help your wounds heal. **Hemovac, Jackson Pratt (JP) and Blake** are common drains used for wounds.

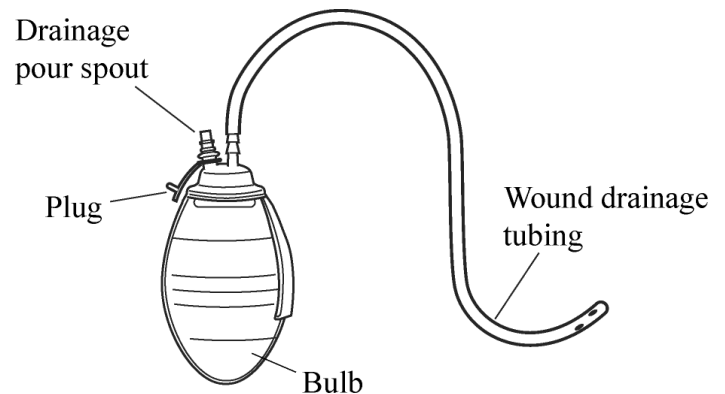
The drain has a squeezable container connected to flexible tubing. The tubing is put into an area near your surgical incision. It is held in place by stitches. When the drain is pressed flat, a gentle suction helps remove fluid from the wound. Your doctor will tell you when your drain can be removed.



## Wound Drainage Systems

### Taking Care of Your Drain(s)

- You must “strip” the drain tubing to clear clots or clogs to keep the drain working right.
- You will need to empty the drain and clean the skin around your drain tubing.
- If your drain has a dressing, you will be given directions about how to change it.



### How to “Strip” the Drain Tubing

The drain tubing may get clots or clogs that may keep the fluid from draining. Before you empty and measure the fluid, you will need to clear the clots from the tubing each time. This is called “stripping or “milking” the tubing. **Follow these steps to clear the tubing.**

1. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water. Rinse and dry.
2. Using one hand, firmly hold the tubing near where it comes out of the skin. This will prevent the drain from being pulled out while you are stripping it.

3. Firmly pinch the tubing with your other hand, using your thumb and first (index) finger. Squeeze the tubing and slowly slide your fingers down the tubing toward the drain. Squeeze the tubing firm enough so it becomes flat. **Do not** use your fingernails as they may damage the tubing.
4. If you see a clot, you may stop and start to move the clot through the tubing. You can use an alcohol pad around the tubing to make it easier to slide your fingers down the tubing.
5. **Stop** if you are pulling on the tubing so much that it hurts. You do not want to pull the tubing so hard that you pull it out of the skin.
6. When you reach the drain, let go of the tubing and remove your hand from the area from where the tubing comes out of your skin.
7. Repeat if needed.

## **How to Empty Your Drain**

Empty your drain in the morning and again in the evening. You should also empty the drain any time it is heavy with a lot of fluid. To empty the drain follow these steps.

1. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water. Rinse and dry.
2. Get a measuring cup and the **Wound Drainage Record Sheet** included at the end of this handout. Use a record sheet to write down the amount and color of fluid from the drain.
3. Unfasten the pin or clip that holds the drain to your clothing.
4. Open the plug on the drain.
5. Turn the drain upside down over the measuring cup and gently squeeze the drain to empty it.
6. Continue to squeeze the drain. Press down on the drain until it is flat and replace the plug. All of the air needs to be out of the drain or it will not work properly.
7. If you are not able to squeeze and plug the drain at the same time, you can put the drain on a firm flat surface like a table.
8. Do not let the drain dangle. Carefully pin or clip the drain to your clothing. Attach the drain lower than the area where it comes out of your body. Make sure the tubing lies flat with no kinks.

9. Check the amount and color of the fluid in the measuring cup. Call your doctor if the fluid is cloudy, bad smelling or the amount has increased.
10. Write the date, time, amount and color of the fluid on the wound drainage record sheet. If you have more than one drain, empty, measure and write down the amount of fluid for each drain.
11. Empty the fluid into the toilet, rinse the measuring cup and flush the toilet.
12. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water. Rinse and dry.

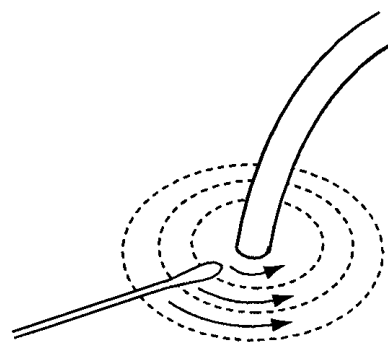
### **How to Clean the Skin Around Your Drain Tubing**

1. You should clean the skin around your drain tubing once a day.
2. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water. Rinse and dry.
3. Clean the skin as directed by your doctor. The nurse will put a check (✓) in the box by what you need to use.

Soap and water

Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Clean the skin around the tubing. Start at the center where the tube comes out of the skin. Use a circular motion to clean the skin around the tube. Slowly move out and away from the tube 3 to 4 inches. **Do not** clean back towards the tube. Let the skin dry.



5. Check the skin around the tube for any redness, swelling, warmth or a bad smelling drainage.
6. If you have more than one drain, clean the skin around each drain tube.
7. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water. Rinse and dry.

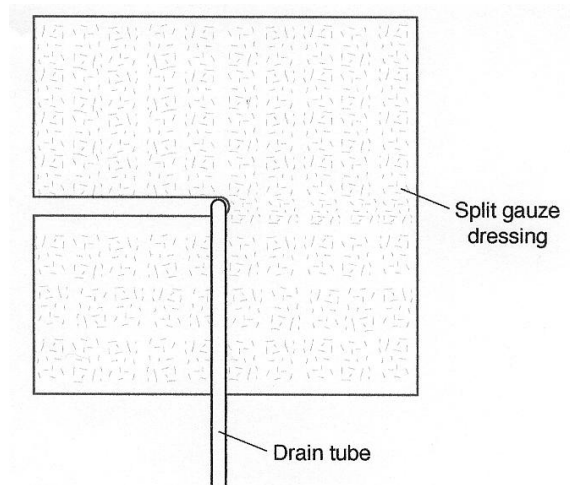
### **How to Change the Dressing**

If you have a dressing, you need to change it once a day or if the dressing gets wet or dirty. **Follow these directions for how to change the dressing:**

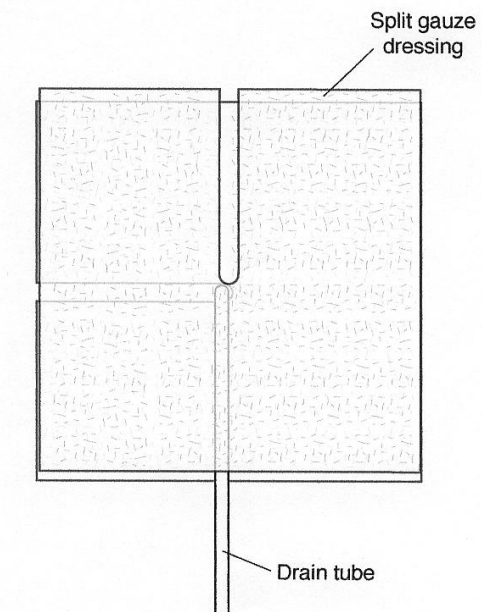
1. Gather your supplies and set up a clean work area.
2. Wash your hands well with soap and warm water. Rinse and dry.

3. Loosen the tape and remove the old dressing. Be careful not to pull the drain out. Look at the dressing for any unusual or bad smelling drainage. Put the old dressing in a plastic bag and throw it away in the trash.
4. Wash your hands again with soap and warm water. Rinse and dry.
5. Check the skin around the tubing for any redness, swelling, warmth or bad smelling drainage.
6. Clean the skin around your tubing. **Follow the instructions on page 3, “How to Clean the Skin Around Your Drain Tubing”.**
7. Use tape to secure the dressing.

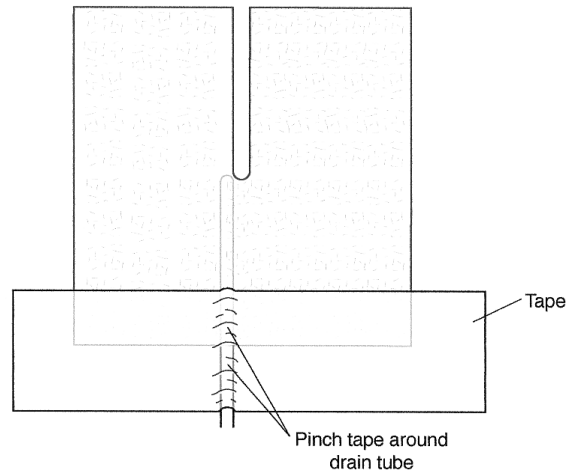
8. Open the 4 x 4 split gauze dressing package and remove the gauze pad. Touch **only** the edges of the gauze pad. Put the gauze around the tube as shown in the picture.



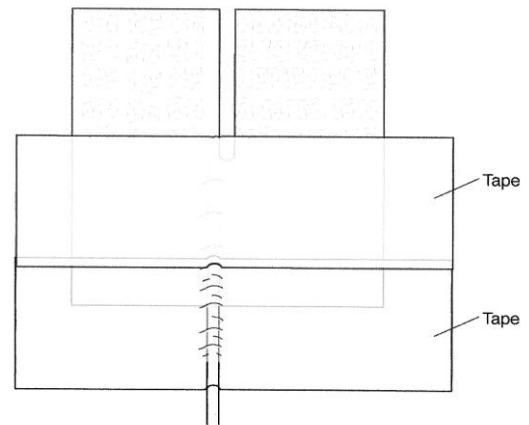
9. If you are directed to use a second split gauze dressing, place it over the first gauze dressing. Place the second gauze to cover the tube as shown in the picture.



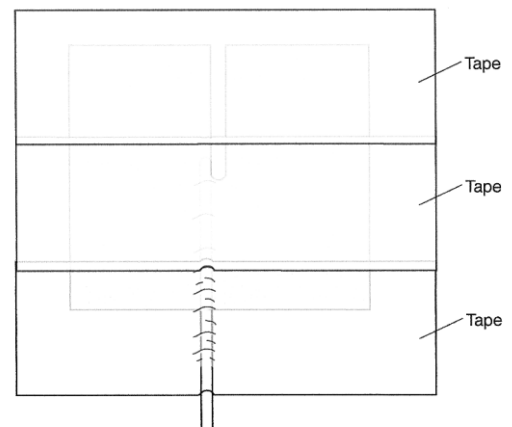
10. Tape the dressing in place. If you are to cover the whole dressing, use 3 pieces of tape. Put the first piece of tape where the tube comes out from under the dressing. Pinch the tape around the tube so it will not move if it gets pulled.



11. Put the second piece of tape over the center of the dressing so the edges of the tapes just overlap.



12. Then put a third piece of tape to cover the rest of the dressing.



## **When to call the doctor?**

Call your doctor **right away** if you have any of the following:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Redness, swelling, or unusual drainage where the tube comes out of the skin
- Drainage that becomes milky, cloudy or bad smelling
- A sudden increase in the amount of drainage (more than 40 ml's)
- Any new or increased pain
- Clots or clogs in the tubing that you are unable to clear by stripping
- Little or no drainage in the drain and fluid is leaking where the tube comes out of the skin
- Your drain will not stay pressed together after you have emptied it
- The drain tubing pulls out of your skin
- Skin irritation, redness or blistering from the tape over your dressing



