Jackson Pratt Drain

Home Care Instructions

What is a Jackson Pratt (JP) drain?

This is a small tube that connects to a bulb. Its gentle suction removes extra fluid from a surgical wound. Your doctor will remove the tube when the amount of fluid decreases.

The color and amount of fluid varies. Right after surgery the fluid is bright red. Over time, it changes to light pink and may become clear or the color of straw.

How should I care for my tube site?

- Keep the skin around the tube dry. Check with your doctor about how to shower. You may need to cover the site with plastic when you shower. Or, it may be okay to let the site get wet and put on a clean bandage after you shower.

- Tape the tube to the skin below the bandage. Make sure to keep some slack in the tube. This helps prevent pulling on the stitches.

- You will need to change your bandage at least once a day. If the bandage gets wet, you will need to change it again.

To change the bandage:

Prepare

- Clean your work area with alcohol or soap and water and a paper towel.

- Wash your hands with soap and water.

- Place on your clean work area:
  - Bag for old bandage
  - Gauze bandage and one-inch paper tape
  - Anti-bacterial wash (.9% normal saline) or soap and water
  - Cotton-tipped swab (like Q-Tips) or a clean wash cloth.

Remove the old bandage

- Remove the old bandage and throw it out. Be careful not to pull on your stitches or tubing. Do not use a scissors—you might cut the tube.

- Check for any redness, swelling, drainage or broken stitches. If you have any of these, call your doctor.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, please let us know. We provide many free services including sign language interpreters, oral interpreters, TTYs, telephone amplifiers, note takers and written materials.
**Clean the site**

- Wash your hands.

- Clean the skin around the tube site. Use soap and water or .9% saline with cotton swabs or a clean wash cloth. Start at the tube site and move outward in a circular motion about 1 to 2 inches away from the site.

- Rinse with water and pat dry.

**Replace the bandage**

- We will give you a gauze bandage (two per package).

- If you have bandages with slits, place one bandage around the tube. Place the other bandage under the tube with the slit facing the opposite way. Tape the bandages in place.

- If you have bandages without slits, fold each one in half. Place one above the tube and one under the tube. Tape in place.

**Tape the tube**

- Tape the tube to the skin. Leave some slack in the tubing.

- Use paper tape or adhesive tape if paper tape will not hold. Your nurse may show you how to use a StayFix bandage (a tube stabilizer).

**Clean up**

- Throw out all used materials.

- Clean work area with alcohol or soap and water and a paper towel.

- Wash your hands with soap and water.
How should I care for the bulb?

- Keep the bulb compressed at all times except while you empty it.
- Attach the bulb to your clothing with tape and a safety pin.
- Try to empty the bulb at the same time every day. Empty the bulb at least once a day, or when the bulb becomes half full. If it becomes too full, there will not be enough suction.

To empty the bulb:

- Wash your hands.
- Open the bulb cap.
- Drain the fluid from the bulb into the measuring cup. If you have two drains, use two cups.
- Clean the mouth of the bulb with an alcohol wipe if your nurse told you to.
- Squeeze the bulb (fold it in half before you close the bulb cap). If it does not stay compressed, call your nurse or clinic.
- Write the amount of drainage on the drainage record. If you have two drains, write the amount for each bulb.
- Flush the drainage down the toilet. Rinse the measuring cup.
- Wash your hands.

When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if:

- You have a fever over 101°F (38.3°C), taken under the tongue.
- The drainage increases or smells bad.
- The skin around your tube has increased redness, swelling, warmth or pain.
- You have pus or fluid leaking at the tube site.
- Your stitches break.
- You think the tube is not draining.
- The tube falls out.
- You have any problems or concerns.

If your doctor has instructed you to strip your tube, follow these steps:

- Use lotion to make the thumb and index finger of one hand slippery.
- With the other hand, pinch off the top of the tube close to the skin.
- While pinching the tube, squeeze the tube with your slippery thumb and index finger. Keep squeezing the tube as you run your fingers down toward the bulb. This will move the fluid into the bulb.
- Let go of the tubing with both hands. If the tube is still blocked, repeat these steps three or four times. Make sure that the bulb is compressed, so it creates suction.
**Your drainage record**

Empty your bulb at the same time each day. Write down the date, time and amount of drainage for each bulb. You may wish to make notes about the color and smell as well.

Bring this record to each clinic visit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Bulb 1: Amount of drainage (in ml or cc)</th>
<th>Bulb 2: Amount of drainage (in ml or cc)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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Your doctor may ask you to call the office each day to report the amount of drainage. If so, please call:

Dr. ______________________________________

at ________________________________.