

## POST-OPERATIVE DRAIN CARE: REGIONAL PLASTIC SURGERY CENTER

1. Drains are simply thin plastic tubes that are placed at the time of surgery in order to allow fluid to leave the surgical site rather than accumulating.
2. The drains will be sutured to the skin and are usually covered by a clear plastic adhesive dressing.
3. There are usually markings on the drain bulb to measure the amount of fluid (mL or cc's).
4. Be sure to wash hands thoroughly before handling the drain.
5. Strip the tubing.
6. Open the valve and the bulb will expand completely.
7. Measure the fluid once the bulb has expanded by reading the marking on the bulb.
8. Record the amount.
9. Gently squeeze the fluid from the drain into the cup to empty it completely.
10. Squeeze the bulb tightly in your hand and close the valve with the other hand (this restores the suction).
11. Keep a daily record (24 hour totals) of the fluid. Each morning empty the drain at the same time to get an accurate 24 hour total. Empty the bulb as often as needed but remember to record the amount each time. Good times to empty the drain are when you get up in the morning, midday, and before bedtime.
12. When you have multiple drains, record separate totals for EACH drain.
13. You can expect the drainage to be bright red for the first 2-3 days, then pinkish, and then turn to a clear, amber color.
14. When the drainage is less than 30cc in a 24-hour period for 2 days, please call the office and make an appointment to have the drain removed.

### FREQUENT QUESTIONS:

1. What do I do if a drain falls out? We do not replace drains once they have fallen out. If the drain is pulled or comes out before it is ready, please call the office during regular hours and schedule an appointment to be seen.
2. What do I do if the dressing falls off? Apply polysporin ointment to the drain site with a clean Q-tip and cover with dry sterile gauze and tape.
3. How do I handle the drains in the shower? It is easiest to safety-pin the drains onto a long ribbon or piece of gauze placed around your waist or neck while showering.
4. What if the drain won't hold suction? This can sometimes be due to a small leak in the system. Please call the office during regular business hours and schedule an appointment to be seen. In the meantime, continue emptying the drain as above.

5. The drain site is red and painful. What should I do? This can signal an infection. Please contact the office during business hours and an appointment should be scheduled within 24 hours.