



## CARE OF DRAINS

### I. **Anatomy:**

Your incision is the surgical wound made by your doctor during the operation.

### II. **Purpose:**

After surgery, you may have a drain that gently draws out fluid and a little blood from your incision, to help your incision heal better. The following directions are to help you care for this drain at home until your doctor removes it.

### III. **Supplies:**

1. Drain
2. Container to empty drainage from drain
3. Antibiotic ointment
4. Q-tips
5. Split gauze
6. Tape
7. Tally Sheet to record your daily temperature and the amount of fluid from your drain or drains

### IV. **Procedure:**

1. Make sure that the drain is **compressed** (squeezed in) at all times. To compress the drain: open the spout, squeeze the drain by making a fist while holding it, and close the spout with your hand.
2. Keep drain **pinned** to your clothing to avoid pulling on the stitches that hold it in place.
3. **Milk** the tubing, as taught, every few hours during the day (at least 3 times a day) to keep the tubing free of clots. Start at the end nearest the body and work your fingers toward the drain.
4. **Empty** your drain once a day (or more often if it looks full). Wash your hands first, then open spout and pour fluid into a clean measuring container. Use care to touch only the outside of the spout when closing it. After emptying, compress the drain.
5. **Record** the amount of fluid from your drain on the sheet provided.
6. **Clean** your skin gently around the drain site, with your daily bath. Check the skin for any redness, swelling, tenderness or pus-like drainage around the tubing. Call your doctor immediately if you notice any of these signs.

7. Apply a thin layer of **antibiotic ointment** to your skin, around the tubing. You may use a Q-tip or clean gauze to apply this ointment. Place split gauze around the tubing, taking care to touch only the corners of the gauze, and tape it to your chest.
8. If you have an incision in your armpit, you may be instructed to wash this area gently and apply a thin layer of antibiotic ointment to the incision line.

**V. Special Instructions:**

Take your temperature once a day (at about the same time each day) and record it. Call your doctor if you have a fever (over 100<sup>0</sup>F or 38<sup>0</sup>C). Take your temperature right away if you get a shaking chill or feel overly warm and than take your temperature again in half an hour, and call your doctor.

**VI. Follow-up:**

Keep all follow-up appointments.

Call the Surgical Outpatient Department at (607) 547-3040 of your doctor if there are any problems or questions.

PATIENT EDUCATION

