



Discharge home with a wound drain

This leaflet will describe how to care
for your drain at home

Building healthier lives

UHB is a no smoking Trust

To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit
www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm

What is a drain?

A drain is a thin PVC tube that is placed next to your wound. Its purpose is to remove the fluid that collects after an operation. The end of the tubing that is outside your body will be attached to a plastic measuring bag/ bottle similar to the one shown in this booklet.

Why do I need a drain?

The drain helps to prevent a build up of fluid, called a seroma, from forming and causing swelling. The wound drain will also minimise any bruising to the area. It is quite normal for you to go home with a drain and look after this yourself, with support from the nursing team. The drain will normally stay in until the amount of fluid is less than **40mls in 24 hours** or for around, ten days. The drain can stay in longer depending on the amount of fluid that is draining. This is a guideline as each patient is individual.

The drain is a closed system, which reduces the risk of infection and safe handling.



EXU Drain



Redivac Drain

In hospital

During your hospital stay the amount of fluid in your drain will be measured and recorded at the same time each day. The nurses on the ward or the Burns and Plastics Outreach team will explain and show you how to care for your drain, to measure the fluid and record the daily amount. Once you are at home, you can measure the fluid level each morning at a time that is convenient for you. Note the type of fluid draining and make a note of it on your chart (at the back of this leaflet).

It is **important** that the fluid level is measured at the same time each day.

Caring for your drain at home

When you are discharged you will have a small supply of dressings. This is in case of any leakage around the drain site. You can pad the wound and contact the hospital.

Be cautious of the drain and bag at all times, some patients place the drain in a shoulder bag and carry it around.

Be aware of the drain site and wound, if it becomes very painful, hot, or swollen please contact us.

If the large drainage bag needs emptying, you can empty the fluid down the toilet, by opening the tap at the bottom of the bag. The used bags and bottles need to be returned to the hospital for disposal.

What if there is no drainage

There may be no fluid to drain. Ensure the clamps are open on the drainage system, between your skin and the drainage bag. Make sure the bag is below the wound site to allow it to drain freely. Sometimes the fluid can become thick in consistency and you may need to gently squeeze the tube to release any blockages.

There may be a blockage at the wound site. If this occurs you may have a collection of fluid under the skin and you need to contact us.

When to contact the Burns and Plastics Outreach team?

A member of Burns and Plastics Outreach team will contact you within 48 hours following your discharge home.

If you need to attend the hospital for any reason we can arrange an appointment.

Possible problems

If the following problems occur, **please do not panic**. Just follow the advice below.

Contact the team:

- **If the drain falls out**, simply place the pad provided over the small wound where the drain was inserted, secure the pad with tape
- **If you feel unwell, have a high temperature**
- **If your tubing becomes disconnected anywhere**, place the pad provided over the tube coming from the operation area, secure it with tape
- **If you have excess leakage from the area where the drain comes from**, cover it with the pad, secure with some tape
- **If the fluid changes colour from straw coloured to red**
- **If you are concerned about any redness, swelling, and/or pain that you may have**

Tips

Clothing that opens at the front is generally easier to wear while you have your drain in.

Ensure there are no kinks in the tubing.

You may have to come back to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital if it is felt that you would be best seen by a doctor.

Date/ Time	Daily amount	Total Amount	Colour of drainage fluid (Please circle)		
			Blood stained Other	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy
			Blood stained	Yellow	Creamy

If the drainage bag needs emptying, please empty down the toilet.

Contact us

- Contact us between 08:00-18:00
www.uhb.nhs.uk/pi-burns-and-plastics.htm
- After hours or the Plastics on call doctor via switchboard
(0121 371200)
- Burns and Plastics Outreach 0121 371 5462 (answer machine) or
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Other leaflets that may help you

- Food for Recovery
- Burns and Plastics Outreach

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.

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The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.

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