If you have concerns out of the above hours, please call 111 (NHS direct) or visit your local walk-in centre. In an emergency please visit your local Emergency Department (A&E).

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Going home with a surgical drainage tube

LIVER SURGERY
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way, Birmingham B15 2GW
Telephone: 0121 627 2000

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
Why am I going home with a surgical drainage tube?
Following liver or pancreas surgery, some patients are discharged home with the surgical drain in place. This is to ensure that the fluid draining through does not gather in the abdominal cavity and become a source of infection.

When will the drain be removed?
The decision to remove the drain depends on the assessment made by clinical team mainly based on the volume, colour and consistency of the fluid that is coming out of the drain. It is therefore important to keep a record of these details to be reviewed by your clinician at your next visit.

How does it feel to be with the drainage tube?
It is normal to experience some pain and bruising in the surgical scar as well as some discomfort at the drain site after your operation but this should ease over the next few days.

The drainage tube is cut short into a drainage bag both of which can be covered under your clothes. You can get up and about and do all the basic daily activities without any concern. You should try to walk every day for at least 30 minutes as you should after any major abdominal operation. If you have a surgical drain, it is a bit early to think about driving or returning to work.

What should you do with the drain at home?
Please empty your bag as required but keep a record about the following for your surgeon to review at your next visit:

**Volume:** Please keep a record of the volume of fluid that you empty every 24 hour or in a 48 hour period accordingly.

**Colour:** There can be variations in the colour but please get in touch if you see a bright red colour in the bag. This could indicate bleeding into the drain.

**Odour:** Green or brown odorous fluid indicates infected fluid.

**Skin around the drain:** Some redness around the drain is expected. But if the redness is spreading beyond the site of the attached bag and if it is hot and tender to touch, you should have this assessed by a nurse at the GP practice or your GP on an urgent basis.

What are the features of infection?
- High temperatures (above 38 degrees)
- Rigors (shivering / shaking)
- Severe abdominal pain, vomiting
- Sweating

If you have any of these features of infection, please contact the clinical team on the numbers below, or your GP.

Can the drains get blocked?
Yes. If the volume suddenly reduces and if you have any of the above features of infection, your drain might be blocked. Please contact the clinical team or your GP if this happens.

Outpatient appointment
You will have regular clinic appointments to see your surgeon until the drain is removed. Please keep these appointments.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call:
(please circle as appropriate)

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<th>Ambulatory Care</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ward 726</td>
<td>0121 371 7308</td>
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<td>HPB CNS Nurse</td>
<td>0121 371 4652</td>
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