

Taking Care of Your Flushable Drain Tube

You have had a drain tube placed into space inside your body. This small tube comes out through your skin. It drains blood, infection, or fluid into a bag outside your body.

Call your doctor if:

- You see any of these signs the skin is infected:
 - red
 - swollen
 - tender to the touch
 - pulls away from the drain
- You have a fever of 101.5°F or higher.
- Worsening pain that was not there before.

It may mean your drain tube is clogged if:

- Liquid comes out around the drain site when you try to flush it.
- You have new pain when you try to flush it.

If you have any of the above symptoms, call by the next day (within 24 hours).

***If your drain is pulled out or falls out, and you are NOT actively losing large amounts of blood from the site, you will need to see a care provider in the next 3 days.**

***If your drain is pulled out or falls out, and you are actively losing large amounts of blood from the site, apply firm pressure to the site with a clean, dry towel for at least 10 minutes. If after 10 minutes of firm pressure, you are still soaking the towel, dial 911 or report to the closest Emergency Room for immediate medical attention!**

Caring for your drain tube

It is **very** important to take care of your drain tube to help prevent an infection. You should:

- Change the bandage and clean the skin around the drain tube. Do this at least once a week or more often if the bandage gets wet or dirty.
- “Flush” the drain tube to keep it from getting clogged. Do this twice a day – once in the morning and once in the evening (or more often if your doctor tells you).

Below are detailed instructions on how to change your bandage, clean around the drain tube, and flush the drain tube. There is also information on bathing, taking antibiotic medicines, and follow up visits.

Changing the bandage

Change the bandage and clean the skin around the drain tube **at least once a week**. If the bandage gets wet or dirty, change it and clean around the drain tube, even if you just changed the bandage the day before.

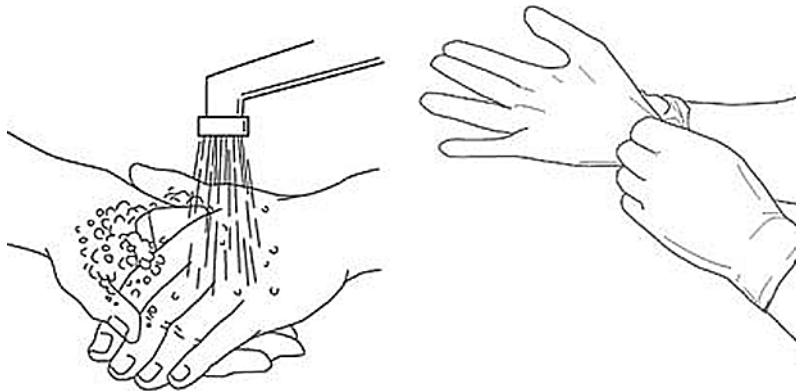
You may change the bandage yourself or a family member or friend may do it for you.

You need these supplies when you change the bandage and clean around the drain tube.

- Plain soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Disposable medical gloves – (optional) they do not have to be sterile
- Gauze pads (4x4s) -- you will need a total of four (4)
- Clean wash cloth
- Medical tape
- Trash bag

Step 1. Remove the old bandage

- Gently remove the old dressing being sure not to pull on the tube.

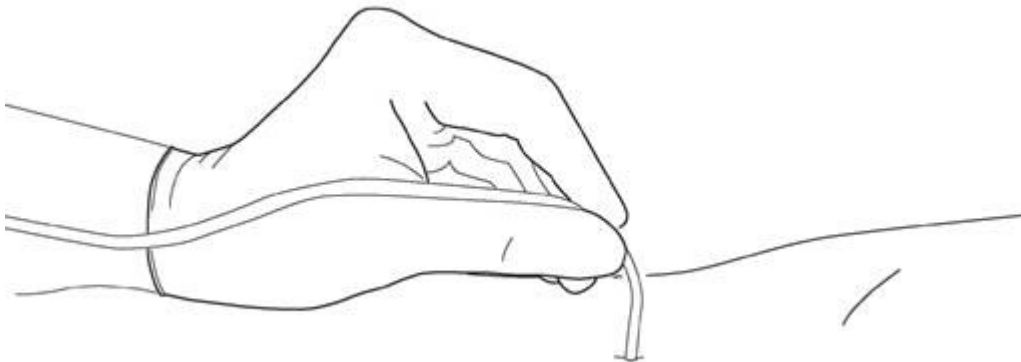


- Wash hands and put on gloves (if wearing gloves).
- Carefully remove the old bandage. Press on the skin next to the drain tube with one hand and gently remove the tape with the other hand.
- Throw the old bandage in the trash bag.
- Look for signs of infection. Is the skin:
 - red
 - swollen
 - tender to the touch
 - pulled away from the drain tube

Call your doctor if you have any of these signs of infection.

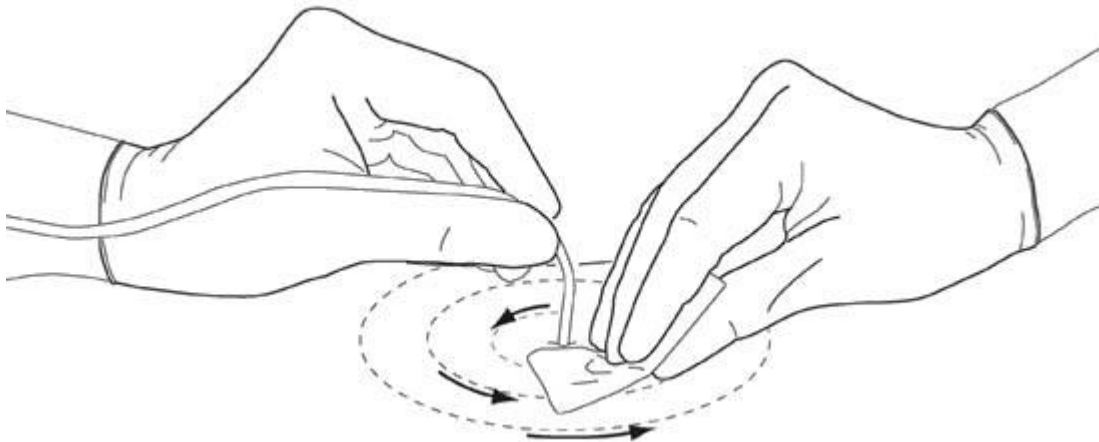
Step 2: Clean the skin.

- Hold the drain tube in place while you are cleaning around it so it does not pull out.



Carefully hold the drain in place.

- Wet a gauze 4x4 with soap and water.
- Start cleaning where the drain tube comes out of the skin.
- Wipe the skin gently in a circle, moving away from the drain tube in bigger and bigger circles.

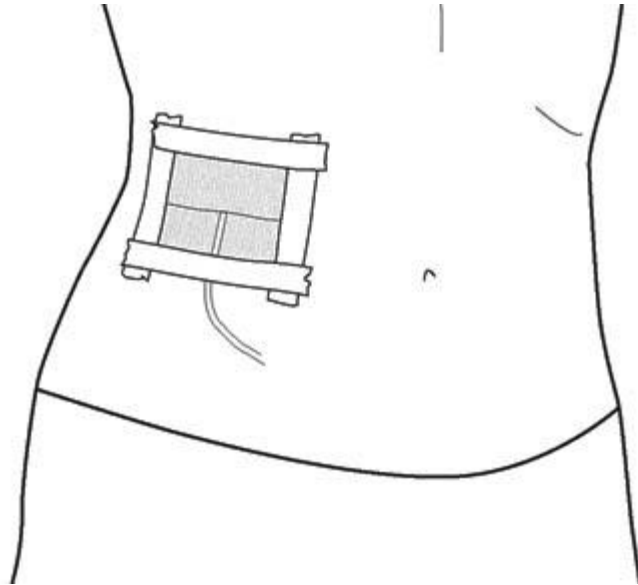


Clean the skin carefully.

- Gently pat the skin with the clean washcloth until it is dry.

Step 3: Put on a fresh bandage: two clean gauze 4x4s and tape.

- Fold each gauze in half.
- Place one on top of the drain tube.
- Place one under the drain tube.
- Tape on all sides.



Tape on a new bandage.

Flushing your drain tube

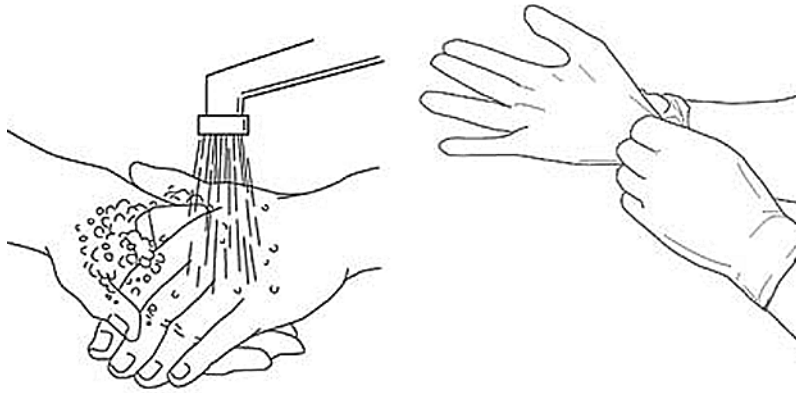
Your doctor may want you to flush your drain tube daily. This helps keep the drain tube from getting clogged. Flush it as frequently as the doctor orders.

You will need these supplies to flush your drain tube:

- Plain soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Disposable medical gloves – (Optional) they do not have to be sterile
- Stopcock or **Adaptor Tube (See Last page for Directions)** – we will give you one to take home
- Saline solution – this comes in pre-filled syringes; you can buy these at most drug stores
- Trash bag

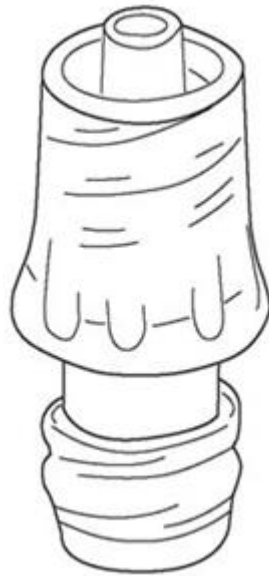
How to flush the drain tube:

- The person cleaning the drain tube should wash their hands with soap & water or hand cleaner and put on a new pair of medical gloves if they choose to.



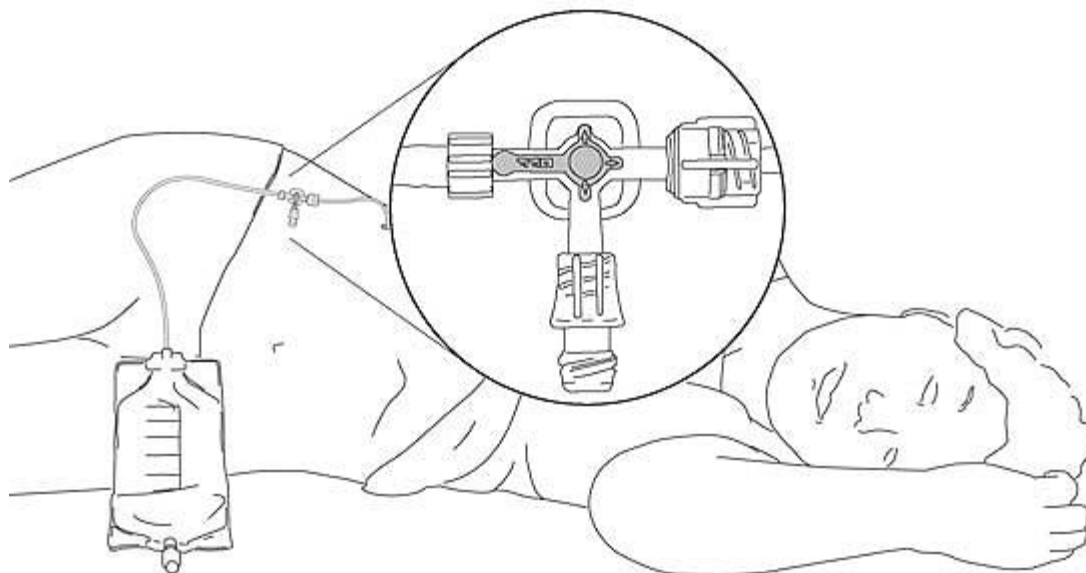
Wash hands and put on gloves (if wearing gloves).

- Open the package of saline in a syringe.
- Unscrew and remove the cap on the drain tube. Put the cap on a clean surface so that nothing touches the inside of the cap. If anything touches the inside of the cap, germs could get into your drain tube and you could get an infection.



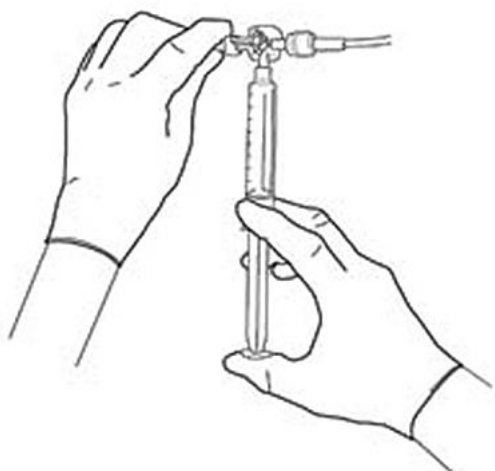
Drain tube cap.

- Turn the stopcock on the drain tube to the “on” position.



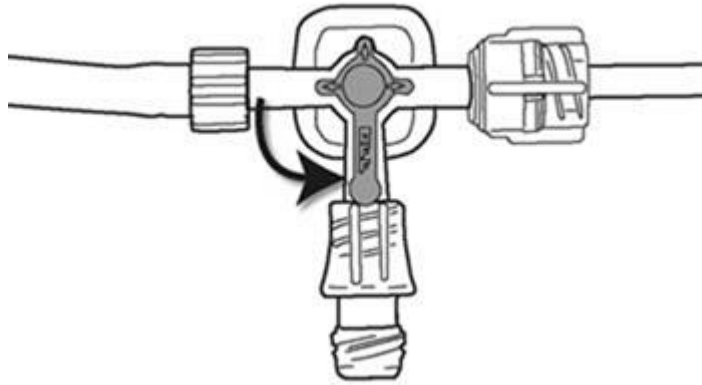
Turn the stopcock to the “on” position.

- Slowly push the 10ml of saline solution into the drain tube.



Attach syringe and flush drain tube.

- Attach syringe and flush drain tube.
- Turn the stopcock to the “off” position.



Turn the stopcock to the “off” position.

- Remove the syringe.
- Screw the cap back on the drain tube. Use a new cap if you are not sure the old one is clean.
- Remove your gloves and throw both the syringe and your gloves in the trash.

Bathing

- Do not take a tub bath or swim or sit in a hot tub while you have a drain tube. IF this is unavoidable, cover the entire site with an occlusive waterproof dressing to prevent it from getting wet.
- Do take showers, but keep the area around the drain tube dry. Keep it dry by taping a piece of plastic wrap over it or by wrapping plastic wrap around your body to cover it.

Antibiotics

- Your doctor may want you to take an antibiotic.
- Follow the instructions on the antibiotic medicine bottle.
- Make sure you take all of the antibiotic. Don't stop taking it before you have finished all the pills unless your doctor tells you.

Follow up visit

- It is important to return for a follow-up visit in 1-2 weeks to have your drain tube checked.
- Write down any questions you have for the doctor and take them with you.
- Make a list of the medicines you are taking and take it with you, or take in the actual medicines in their original bottles.