

## HAND & PLASTIC SURGERY CENTRE, P.L.C.

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*Surgery of the Hand & Upper Extremity*  
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### DRAIN CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Drains are used after certain surgical procedures to remove the build-up of fluids from a cavity left behind from the operation. If fluids are allowed to build-up, they will prevent deeper healing of the tissues and are a source of infection...and ultimately wound breakdown. The fluid build-up may also cause swelling and discomfort.

- Your drain exit site from the skin will either be covered with dry gauze which is split to fit around the tube or a transparent adhesive dressing.
- Recording of the drain output is important to determine when they may be safely removed. Drain(s) should be emptied at the same hour twice a day (AM and PM) and recorded. As such, you are recording 12 hours at a time. The AM and PM amounts are added together to get the 24 hour total. In general, drains are removed when the 24 hour total is less than 30cc for any particular drain.
- Twice a day, or as needed, maintain patency of the drain tube by pinching the tube near the skin exit site with one hand and stripping the tube between the thumb and index finger of the opposite hand. Clots and pieces of tissue may be seen in the tubing. If they seem to be obstructing the tube's flow, roll the tubing between your fingers in an attempt to mobilize it. DO NOT flush anything into the tubing in an attempt to clean it.
- If the drain should accidentally fall out completely, cover the site with antibiotic ointment and gauze. DO NOT push the drain back in.
- You may shower with the drains. The drains may be long enough to hang and lay on the floor. Submerging the drains in a bath should not be done as bath water may enter the surgical site. You may take a sponge or tub bath as long as the drain sites do not get under water.
- Continue your antibiotics until the drains are removed.
- Bring your drain record with you for each appointment. Drains will be removed when the total output is 30ccs or less for a 24 hour period.

Please contact our office at (616) 459-4131 if you have any questions so we can further assist you or if any of the following occurs:

- The drainage has suddenly stopped or has increased significantly: the drainage amount should decrease gradually.
- There is a sudden change in the color of the drainage: the drainage should gradually change from bloody to a straw-colored fluid.
- Call if the drainage becomes bloody again or changes to a milky white fluid.
- There is an increase in redness or swelling around the insertion site of the drain.
- You are unable to keep the sides of the container compressed.
- The drain has moved out of position or has come out.

\*SEE DRAIN OUTPUT RECORD\* ----->