SURGICAL DRAIN: WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

TRANSCRIPT

A surgical drain is a safe and effective part of your recovery. Make sure your drain and insertion site are kept clean, infection free and in good working order. To ensure it stays working safely, here are some things to keep in mind.

If your healthcare provider says you can shower with your drain, after you shower, make sure you dry the site thoroughly and put on new dressings.

Do not go swimming or take a tub bath while you have a surgical drain. Avoid contact sports.

Wear loose clothing that does not rub or pull on your tubing. You may want to use a safety pin to attach it to your clothing, or put it in a fanny pack to avoid accidental pulling or catching on anything.

Try to sleep in a comfortable position that does not pull on your tubing. And check your tubing for any twists, kinks, tears or cracks on a regular basis.

Each time you empty the fluid, check the area around your drain insertion site for any signs of infection. Look for: increased pain, swelling, warmth or redness at the area; red streaks leading from your insertion site; cloudy or foul smelling drainage; or blood draining from the site. If you notice any of these signs, or develop a fever, call your healthcare provider right away.

> *"And as far as the tenderness, it's around the area, you know, where the drain actually comes out the port area. I did check it, it didn't seem warm or anything like that, it was just very tender."*

You may have an infection that needs to be treated right away.

If at any point you notice a blood clot in the drain that seems to be completely blocking the tube, call your healthcare provider.

If you notice a large amount of fluid leaking from the drain site, check to make sure the suction is working properly by making sure your bulb is flat and the plug is in. Clean the area around the insertion site and change the dressings. Then call your healthcare provider.

And if your drain falls out at home, call your healthcare provider right away.

In the days and weeks following surgery, your surgical drain is an important part of your recovery. Follow all of your healthcare provider's instructions to keep it safe and infection free.

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