

How to Change Your Surgical Drain Dressings

To prevent infection and keep your surgical drain healthy, you will need to change the dressings covering the tube insertion site on a regular basis, usually once a day unless the dressings get wet or soiled. If they do, change them right away. To change your dressings, have your supplies handy in a clean workspace. Wear gloves or wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

Remove your old dressings carefully and throw them away in a plastic trash bag. If there is blood on the dressings, wrap them in a small plastic bag, like a sandwich bag, and then throw it in the trash.

Clean the skin around your insertion site thoroughly. You can use soap and water or a saline solution on a small piece of gauze to gently clean the area. Pat the area dry. Next, put the new dressings on your insertion site and secure them with medical tape. Wash your hands thoroughly again.

Remember to change your dressings every day, or as directed by your healthcare provider. Develop a routine to help you remember when to change them. You may want to set an alert on your phone or post a reminder so you don't forget.

Keeping all of your surgical drain equipment clean, including the dressings, is important to prevent infection. If you have any questions about how to change your dressings, or any other part of your surgical drain care, contact your healthcare provider.