



## SURGICAL DRAIN CARE INSTRUCTIONS

**Aspect Plastic Surgery | Dr. Waqqas Jalil, MD FRCSC**

Some procedures require the use of small surgical drains to help remove excess fluid that can accumulate beneath the skin after surgery. Drains are temporary, but they play an important role in reducing swelling, protecting your incisions, and supporting a smooth and safe recovery.

These instructions will guide you through everything you need to know about caring for your drains at home.

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### 1. Why Drains Are Used

Drains help:

- Prevent fluid (blood, serum, lymph) from collecting under the skin
- Reduce swelling and tension on the incision
- Improve contour and healing after body and facial procedures
- Lower the risk of seroma formation
- Support optimal aesthetic results

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### 2. How Your Drain Works

A drain consists of:

- A soft silicone tube placed under the skin
- A small bulb (reservoir) that provides gentle suction

When the bulb is compressed and capped, it creates negative pressure that continuously draws excess fluid away from the surgical area.

**For the drain to function properly, the bulb must stay compressed at all times.**

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### 3. How to Empty Your Drain

You will empty the drain 2–3 times per day, or whenever the bulb is half full.

**Step-by-step:**

1. Wash your hands thoroughly.
2. Uncap the bulb.
3. Gently squeeze the fluid into a clean measuring cup.
4. Record the amount, colour, and time in your Drain Log.



5. Fully compress the bulb with one hand.
6. While keeping it compressed, replace the cap securely.

**Important:**

A bulb that is not compressed is not working.

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#### **4. Milking / Stripping the Tubing**

This helps prevent clots from blocking the drain.

1. Hold the tubing close to where it enters your skin.
2. With your other hand, pinch the tube and gently slide your fingers downward toward the bulb.
3. Do this once or twice daily, or as instructed by Dr. Jalil.

A small amount of discomfort is normal; severe pain is not.

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#### **5. What Normal Drain Output Looks Like**

Fluid appearance will naturally change as you heal:

- **Days 1–2:** darker red or blood-tinged
- **Days 3–5:** lighter pink, thin
- **Days 5+:** straw-coloured, yellowish, or clear

The overall amount should gradually decrease each day.

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#### **6. Drain Removal**

Drains are typically removed in clinic when:

- Output is **less than 30 mL per drain in 24 hours** for two consecutive days, **or**
- Dr. Jalil determines removal is clinically appropriate

Removal is quick, simple, and generally very well tolerated.

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#### **7. Activity & Bathing**

- You may shower once cleared — usually **after 48 hours**, unless instructed otherwise.
- Keep the drain site dry; cover it lightly with gauze while showering.
- Do NOT submerge drains in a tub, pool, or hot tub.
- Secure drains using a lanyard, belt loop, or drain apron to prevent pulling.

#### **8. Caring for the Drain Site**

- Keep the area clean and dry.
- Change the small gauze pad around the entry site daily or if it becomes wet.



- Mild redness is normal; spreading redness is not.
- Avoid ointments, creams, or antiseptics unless instructed by Dr. Jalil.

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## 9. When to Contact Aspect Plastic Surgery

Call us **immediately** if you notice:

- A sudden increase in drainage or a bulb filling quickly with bright red blood
- No drainage for 12 hours **and** the bulb has re-expanded (may indicate blockage)
- Fever greater than 38°C
- Increasing redness, warmth, or pus at the drain site
- Foul-smelling drainage
- New or worsening pain near the drain
- The drain becomes loose, dislodged, or accidentally removed

We are always available to guide you.

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Date	Time	Amount (mL)	Color	Notes (Pain, clotting, changes, etc.)

## Aspect