

My HEMOVAC DRAIN

WHAT'S A HEMOVAC DRAIN?

A Hemovac drain is a type of drain that is put into a wound during surgery to help remove blood and fluid. *This drain is made up of four parts (as seen in figure 1):*

- The evacuator, which when squeezed tightly helps to suck the fluid out of the wound. The evacuator also holds the fluid until it can be emptied;
- The evacuator tubing, which connects the evacuator to the connector. The tubing allows fluid from your surgical wound to move to the evacuator;
- The connector, which joins the evacuator tubing to the wound tubing, and;
- The wound tubing, which is put into the wound during your surgery to allow for the flow of blood and fluids from your wound into the drain system.

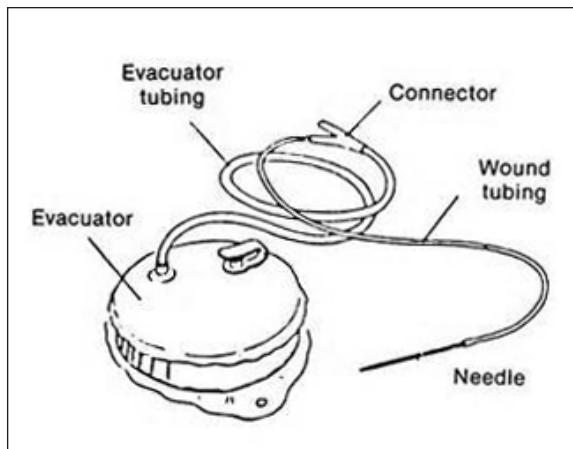


Figure 1: Hemovac Drain

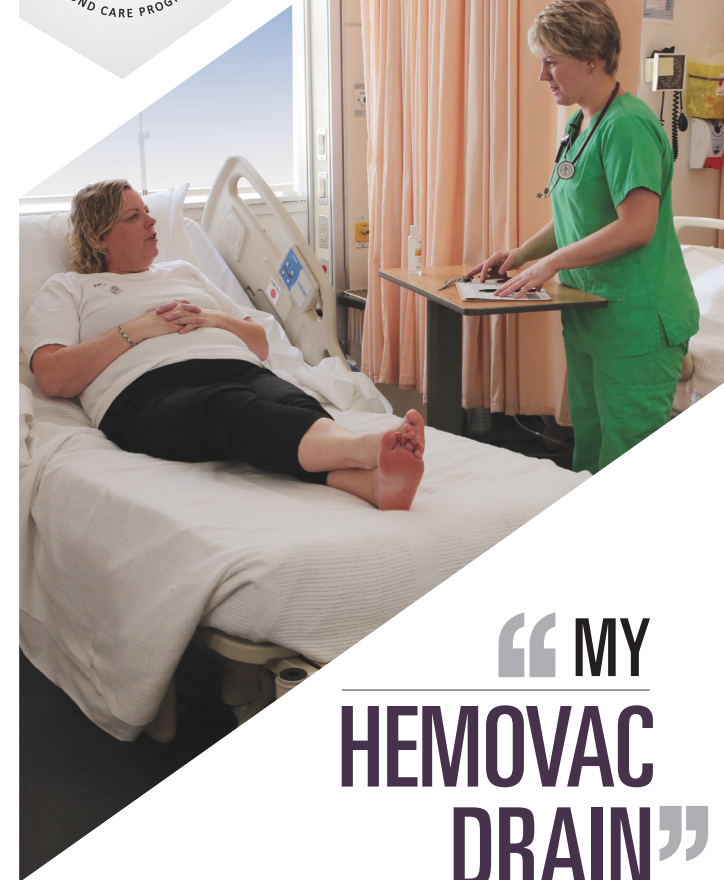
- Remove your gloves, and apply a new clean pair;
- Clean around the drain exit site (where the drain comes out of your body) using the cleaning solution ordered by your surgeon. Clean from where the drain enters your skin, outwards. Allow the area to air dry;
- Open your package of sterile drain sponges and separate the two sponges. Put one of the sponges around the drain and the second around the drain in the opposite direction. This keeps the dressings from slipping, and;
- Cover the drain site with a layer of sterile 4" x 4" gauze, and tape the dressing edges in place.

Call your healthcare provider IMMEDIATELY if you have increased redness or swelling around where the tube exits your body, increased pain, bleeding around the tube exit site, a fever for more than four hours, drainage in the container that looks or smells like pus, if your Hemovac container will not stay compressed, or if the drain comes out by accident.

For more information, go to:
swrwoundcareprogram.ca



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“MY HEMOVAC DRAIN”

Instructions on how to care
for your or your or your loved
one's Hemovac drain





WHAT'S A HEMOVAC DRAIN? [CON'T]

A Hemovac drain is temporary and is used until the amount of fluid being created within your surgical wound slows down enough to allow your wound to heal. When the Hemovac drain is collecting less than 30cc (1oz.) of fluid in 24 hours (unless otherwise directed by your surgeon), the drain is taken out by a nurse or doctor. This is done by taking out any stitches that are holding the tube in place, and then pulling the tube out. This can be uncomfortable, so consider taking pain medication at least 30 minutes before this procedure.

The fluid in the Hemovac drain will change color as the wound ages and as the amount of fluid decreases. It's normal to see the drain collect red blood in the beginning. Over time the color of the fluid will turn pink and finally yellow. It's also normal to see blood clots in the tubing. If you see clots in the tubing it's important that you 'strip' the tubing. *To 'strip' the tubing you:*

- Hold the tube near where it enters your skin with one of your hands. This steadies the tubing so that you don't accidentally pull it out when you strip it;
- Use the index finger and thumb of your opposite hand to squeeze the tubing from just below where it is inserted into the skin (and where your other hand is), down towards the evacuator. Repeat this as many times as needed until you see any clots in the line move. You may also try squeezing the connector a number of times, and;
- Once you have 'stripped' the tubing down to the evacuator, let go of the tubing near where it enters your skin. It is wise to strip your tubing each time you empty your drain to keep clots from forming.

HOW DO I EMPTY MY HEMOVAC DRAIN?

To keep your drain from being pulled out accidentally, pin your Hemovac drain to your clothes using a large safety pin. The safety pin is placed through the plastic loop on the top of the evacuator. The drain must be pinned to a spot that is lower than the wound itself. Be careful NOT to puncture the drain or yourself, and ensure there is slack in the tubing to let you move freely! Pinning the drain may also make the drain feel more comfortable, especially where it exits from your body. To care for your Hemovac drain at home (and in addition to 'stripping' the drain tubing) you will need to empty your drain and change your drain dressing. *To empty the drain:*

- Gather your supplies: measuring cup, syringe or small medicine cup for measuring small amounts of fluid; and pencil and paper;
- Wash your hands with soap and water. Rinse your hands well, and towel them dry (use a clean towel or paper towel);
- Unpin the drain from your clothes;
- Remove the drain plug from the Hemovac container and pour the fluid into your measuring container. Empty the container the best you can (you may need to turn the container over two or three times to get all of the fluid out). Try not to let the opening of the container touch the inside of the measuring container;
- Place the Hemovac container on a clean, hard, flat surface. With one hand, push the Hemovac container flat. While you are still squeezing the Hemovac container flat, replace the drain plug;
- Pin the drain back onto your clothes;

- Measure the amount of fluid that was emptied out of your drain (use a syringe or small medicine cup to measure small amounts). Record the amount of drainage on a piece of paper. Give this record of your drain output to your healthcare provider when you next see them, and;
- Rinse the measuring equipment out with warm soapy water, and wash your hands again.
The drain should be emptied at least twice a day (at breakfast and bedtime) and when the container is fully expanded, or as directed by your surgeon.

HOW DO I CHANGE MY HEMOVAC DRESSING?

If you, a family member, friend or neighbor is able to change your Hemovac dressing, you will be taught to do so. It is important that you change the dressing as instructed. The most commonly used Hemovac dressing is a simple dry gauze dressing. Such dressings are changed daily and when the dressing leaks through or falls off.

To put on a dry gauze dressing:

- Gather your supplies: clean medical gloves, a package of pre-cut drain sponge (4' x 4", one package has two pieces of gauze in it), two packages of sterile gauze (4"x4"), medical tape, a cleaning agent (alcohol swab, hydrogen peroxide, chlorhexidine swab stick, sterile water—it depends on your surgeon's preference/order);
- Wash your hands with soap and water. Rinse your hands well, and towel them dry (use a clean towel or paper towel);
- Put on a pair of clean medical gloves;
- Remove the old dressing carefully by removing the tape first, followed by the gauze dressing pieces. Throw all pieces of the old dressing in the garbage;

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