

Department of Plastic Surgery

# Going home with drains inserted: information for patients

Your surgeon inserted a drain into your wound to remove any blood or fluid from the area. This is normal procedure for the surgery you have had. It is possible for you to go home with the drains attached. This leaflet gives you some information about how to cope with the drains when you are at home.

The drain is called a HandyVac drain and has a vacuum which draws excess fluid away from the operation site. It is attached to the skin by a stitch. If you follow the advice in this leaflet, it is unusual for this to become dislodged although drain sites can sometimes leak. We will give you some spare dressings to take home with you in case this happens.

## Before going home

Before your discharge the nurses will check your drain site and give you advice about how to keep the area clean. They will empty the drainage bag and chart the amount in your medical records. Your nurse will fully explain to you how to empty the drain and keep a chart of the drainage.

## How to empty your drain

Your nurse will have fully explained to you how to empty your drain before you are discharged home. We will also have given you an illustrated leaflet showing how this is done and a drainage chart for you to record the amount drained every 24 hours. Please contact **0161 918 7586** and leave a voicemail message with your name, hospital number and drainage for that day.

## Care of your drain at home

When you are at home you must remember to take things easy and avoid any strenuous exercise. If your drain accidentally falls out, don't worry. Place some pressure over the drain site for a few minutes and apply a clean dressing. Remember to measure the fluid in the drain then dispose of any fluid in the drain down the toilet and place the drain into a sealed plastic bag. Bring this with you at your next appointment when we will dispose of the drain for you.

You may find that the area around the drain site starts to swell which may be a collection of fluid called seroma. If this happens, please contact us for advice.

## Removing the drain

Your surgeon will decide when your drain can be removed. This usually depends on the type of surgery you have had, the amount of fluid in the drains and the appearance of the drain site. When your drain is ready to be removed, the stitch holding the drain in place will be removed and the drain eased out. This will be carried out as an outpatient clinic at The Christie or by a district nurse.



## Contacts

If you have any concerns, please contact us on:

### Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm

The Plastic surgery nursing office

0161 918 7586 or 7587 (answerphone)

### After 5pm and at weekends

Surgical oncology unit (department 4)

0161 446 3860 or 3862

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

The Christie is committed to producing high quality, evidence based information for patients. Our patient information adheres to the principles and quality statements of the Information Standard. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact **[the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net](mailto:the-christie.patient.information@nhs.net)**

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.



Contact The Christie Hotline for  
urgent support and specialist advice  
**The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658**  
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week