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Ambulatory Chest Drainage System
Chest Bag

Patient management guide

Moving with the times



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AMBULATORY CHEST DRAINAGE SYSTEM (Chest Bag)

PATIENT MANAGEMENT GUIDE

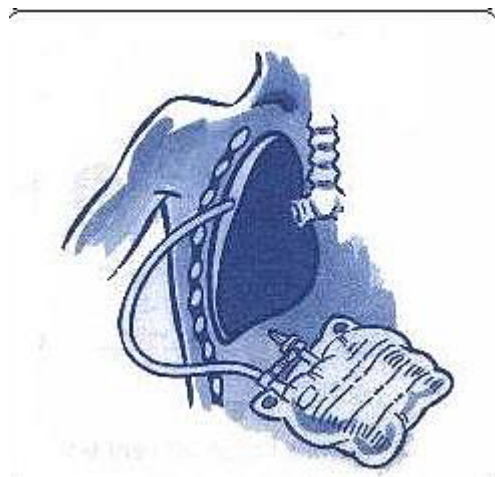
Introduction

You have left hospital with a chest drain still inside your chest and connected to a SIMS Portex Ambulatory Chest Drainage System.

This is to allow you to return home and lead as near normal a life as possible while drainage and treatment continue. The system has been designed so you can move about with it.

What is your chest drainage system made of?

- A **chest drain** – is a tube partly pushed into your chest. It does not go into your lung, but sits in the space between the lung and the chest wall (called the pleural cavity) to remove-unwanted fluid or air.



- A **chest drainage bag with tubing¹** - is connected to your chest drain, to collect the fluid drained from your chest or to let the air out. The tubing can be shortened if necessary



- The bag has an **air vent²**, **which** allows the air drained from your chest to pass from the bag to the outside. This prevents the bag from inflating. The vent is protected by a **vent cage³** to prevent any accidental blockages with could stop air escaping.
- The bag also includes a one-way valve called a **flutter valve⁴**. This prevents any air going back into your chest once it has drained into the bag.
- **Graduations⁵** on the bag will help you monitor the amount of fluid drained from your chest over a period of time. The doctors or nurses may have cut the tubing to length when the bag was fitted. You should only disconnect the tubing when you change the bag, according to the procedure described in the paragraphs entitled “Overfilled bag” and “What if the drain is disconnected from the tubing (next pages). You should always talk to your doctor or nurse about cutting the tubing. The tubing should be long enough so that it does not pull on the chest drain when you move, when you change the position of the bag or remove the bag from your shoulder.
- The chest bag includes an elasticated strip to use as a **belt or a shoulder strap⁶** to make it easy to carry under your clothing.

What should you do if your chest stops draining?

Drainage may stop because there is no more fluid or air to drain from your chest.

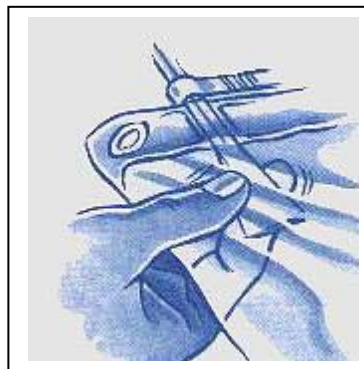
Drainage may also be interrupted by:

- a blocked flutter valve
- blocked tubing
- a blocked air vent
- and overfilled bag, or
- a blocked chest drain

Blockages may be more common when the fluid drained from your chest is thick.

- **Blocked flutter valve**

The flutter valve may appear to be full of fluid, which cannot drop into the bag, and there may be a build up of fluid in some of the tubing just above the valve. Gently move the valve between your fingers to move the blockage.



- **Blocked tubing**

A section of the tubing (or part of the chest drain you can see) may appear to be full of fluid, which cannot move towards the bag. If this happens in the tubing, change the chest bag. If there is a blockage in the chest drain contact the hospital, doctor or nurse responsible for your care.

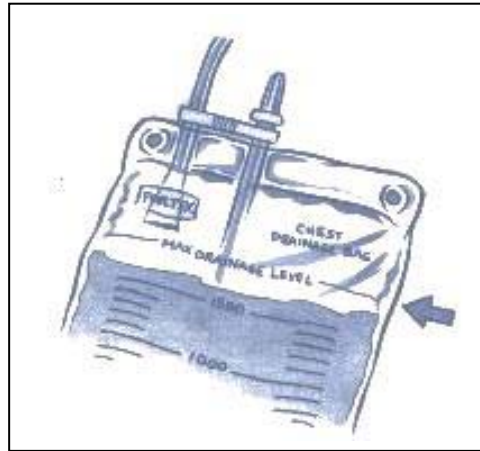
- **Blocked air vent**

The vent cage may become blocked by a loose particle or clothing. Clear the vent cage and make sure that your clothing does not prevent air

escaping from the vent. You should wear only loose clothing as tight clothes may restrict the drainage. Make sure your bed covers are also loose at night.

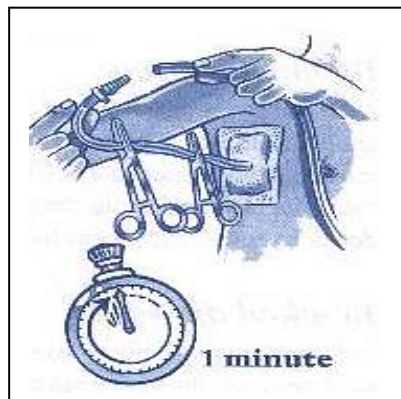
- **Overfilled bag**

Do not let the bag fill above the top graduation line, which says maximum drainage level. If the bag is full, you can change it for a new one following the instructions given to you by your doctor or nurse. To prevent spillage or unpleasant smells we recommend that the chest drainage bag is changed before it becomes full.



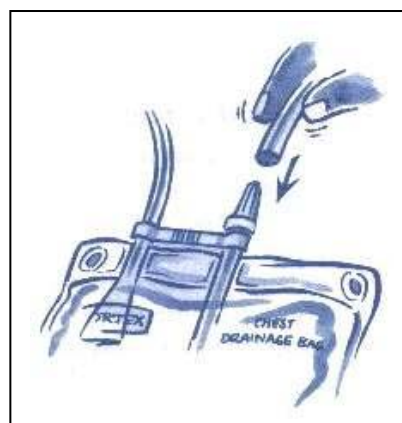
Warning

Never disconnect the chest drain from the tubing without clamping the drain beforehand. Talk to your doctor or nurse about having clamps. **Never** clamp the drain for longer than a minute or so, particularly in the case of draining air when drainage should be discontinued as little as possible.



You must change the bag quickly

To get rid of the used bag, push the end of the tubing firmly onto the vent cage. This seals the drainage system and prevents it from spilling. You will need to make arrangements with your doctor or district nurse to get rid of the bag. You must not get rid of these bags in your home or other rubbish bins.



In an emergency, you can empty the bag through the vent.

- **Blocked chest drain**

If drainage has stopped and all the other procedures have not succeeded, the part of the chest drain, which is inside your chest, may be blocked. Contact the hospital, your doctor or your nurse for advice.

If your chest stops draining often contact the hospital, doctor or nurse responsible for your care.

What if the drain is disconnected from the tubing?

If the drain is disconnected from the tubing, clamp the drain using your fingers, surgical clamp or forceps and push the connector of the drain firmly back inside the tubing. Unclamp the drain immediately. You must do this quickly. If you cannot reconnect the drain to the tubing, **only then** must you leave the drain clamped. Contact the hospital, your doctor or nurse **immediately**.

What if the drainage suddenly changes?

If the drainage stops or changes in rate it can be normal. However, if you are worried or notice any unusual changes to either the colour or the consistency of the fluid, or if the amount unexpectedly increases, contact the hospital, your doctor or nurse immediately.

The skin around the wound

The skin around the chest drain should be clean and look nearly normal. A dry dressing may have been applied. It should be changed 2 to 3 times a week if it remains clean and dry. If the skin becomes sore, red or any other colour or starts oozing fluid, treat it as your doctor, or nurse has told you and contact them immediately.

TOP TIPS

- **Do not take the drainage bag into bed as it may spill. Hang it over the side instead**
- **Do not swing or pull on the drain or bag**
- **Never use pins to attach your drain on your bag to your clothes**
- **If you want to attach the bag to your skin, use tape**
- **If you are worried about anything, contact your hospital, your doctor or nurse immediately**

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