

Internally Draining Percutaneous Transhepatic Catheter (PTC) or Biliary Tube Discharge Instructions

What are my care instructions?

Dressing changes

- Change dressing every 1-2 days or after taking a shower.
- Wash your hands.
- Remove the old dressing and clean around the tube daily with a clean, single use washcloth, using mild liquid soap and water.
- Rinse well.
- Pat dry.
- Apply new, clean dressing, be careful to position tube so that it does not kink.

Follow-up care

- Tubes are usually changed every 4-6 weeks.
- If for some reason you are not called with a follow-up appointment, please call our office at 734-615-0189 to schedule your tube change.

Flushing

Some tubes need to be flushed daily.

- To flush your PTC tube use 10cc syringe filled with normal saline.
- Connect syringe to end of tube.
- Push 10cc of normal saline into the tube as fast as possible without causing discomfort.
- Do not pull back on syringe.

How will I care for myself at home?

Showering and bathing

- Avoid hot tubs and swimming
- Do not allow the puncture site to be under water as this may lead to the development of infection.

Showering during the first 14 days after placement of the tube

- Before taking a shower, cover the dressing with a double layer of plastic wrap (also called Saran Wrap) and tape edges to skin.
- After the shower, remove plastic wrap and change dressing.

Showering after the site is healed or after 2 weeks

- You may shower without the dressing or plastic wrap using soap and water. Rinse well. Pat the area dry and apply a clean, dry, dressing.
- You can sit in a bathtub if you prefer, but the water level **must be well below where the tube enters your skin** (puncture site).

Activity

- Avoid any activity that causes a pulling sensation or pain around the tube, or kinking of the tube.
- Avoid activities such as bending forward or lifting heavy objects as this may result in bile leaking around the tube.

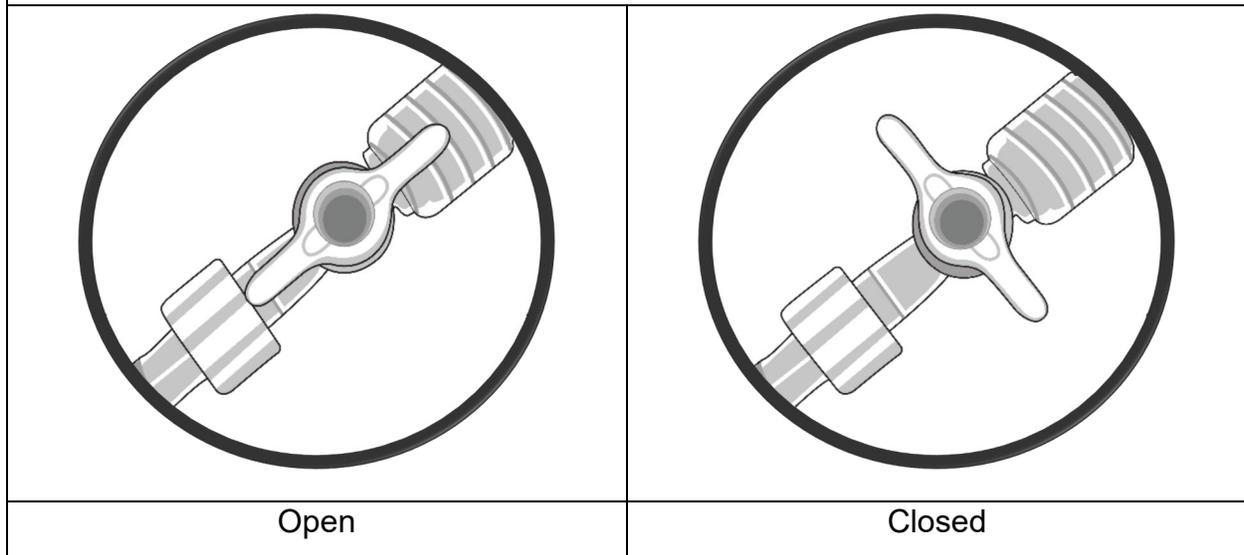
Diet

- You can eat your normal diet. If your stomach is upset, try bland, low-fat foods like plain rice, toast and yogurt
- Drink plenty of fluids (unless your doctor tells you not to).

Medications

- You can take your normal prescription medicines as your doctor has instructed you to do.
- If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, ask your doctor if you can take an over-the-counter medicine for your pain.

The valve should be in the open position to allow proper drainage from tube into drainage bag.



When should I call for help?

Call Vascular and Interventional Radiology at 734-936-4500, option 1, 5 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday if you have any of the following:

- Fever (greater than 100.6°F)
- Chills
- Dark urine and light colored stool
- Leakage of bile around the tube and onto your skin requiring several dressing changes in a day.
- Jaundice (yellow skin)
- Difficulty flushing the tube or a leak around the tube when flushing.

If any of the above happens, attach a drainage bag to the tube and call Vascular and Interventional Radiology.

If the tube falls out it must be replaced within 12-24 hours. Cover the hole in the skin with gauze pads and tape and call Interventional Radiology.

After hours you can call the Interventional Radiologist on call at 734-936-6267.

Call 911 anytime you think you need emergency care. For example, you need to call if:

- You have shortness of breath
- You have chest pains
- You passed out (lost consciousness)

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 1/2023