

Penrose Drain Care & Removal Post-Operative Instructions

What is a Penrose drain?

A **Penrose drain** is a soft, flat, flexible tube placed into an incision (cut) during surgery. The Penrose drain prevents blood and body fluid from collecting under your incision site.

How do I take care of my drain insertion site?

Part of the Penrose drain will be inside of your body. One or both ends of the drain will come out of your incision. Some blood and fluid will flow out of your drain and may continue for several days. This is normal.

- Apply a gauze pad if there is any leakage from the drain site. Replace the pad if it becomes wet.

How do I change my dressing?

1. Wash your hands with soap and water
2. Carefully remove your gauze dressing
3. Replace with a new gauze dressing

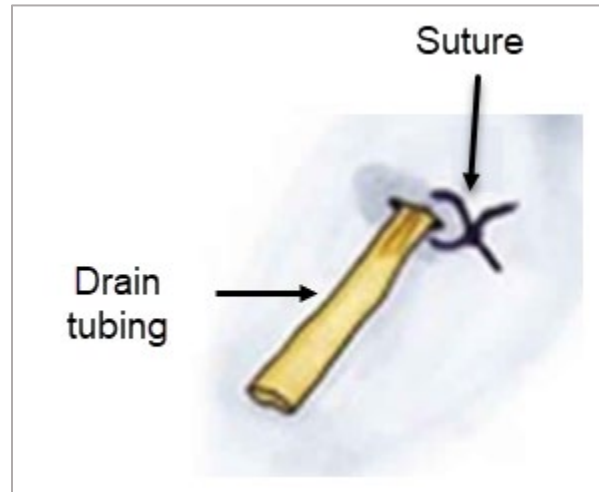
How long will I have the Penrose drain in place?

Your drain will be in place for about 2-3 days after surgery. Your surgeon will tell you when to remove the Penrose drain at home.

How do I remove the Penrose drain?

1. Gather supplies:
 - 4x4 inch gauze pads
 - Suture removal kit
 - Fresh jock strap or tight underwear
2. Wash your hands with soap and water
3. We suggest removing your drain in your shower or tub because fluid will leak out when you remove the drain.
4. Remove any gauze dressing that is covering the drain site

5. Cut the black sutures (stiches) where indicted by the arrow in the illustration below using the suture removal scissors. Use forceps included in the kit (if necessary) to help remove the sutures by gently pulling them away from the skin.
6. Gently pull and remove the yellow/white rubbery drain tubing and pull to remove any black suture if it is still in the skin. The drain will be about 6-12 inches long.



7. If you have 2 drains, remove them separately on each side.
8. **Do not force drain removal. If you feel resistance, stop and notify your surgeon.**
9. Place a gauze dressing over the drain site after you remove the drain and put on a jock strap or tight underwear.
10. Some blood and fluid will flow out of your drain site and may continue for several days. This is normal. Keep gauze pads over the hole until the drainage stops.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by University of Michigan (U-M) Health for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by U-M Health and for which U-M Health 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.

Author: Kristen Lemorie BSN, RN; James Dupree MD
Edited by: Karelyn Munro BA

Patient Education by [U-M Health](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 12/2021