

Going home with a redivac drain following breast surgery

After your breast reconstruction operation you may have a wound drain called a 'redivac' inserted. This leaflet explains why you have it, how to use it safely and how to care for your wound after leaving hospital. Some patients may receive a different type of drain (Redon bottle); if this is the case your nurse will give you instructions on how to use and empty it.

The redivac wound drain prevents swelling caused by fluid collection and also helps to minimise bruising. It can stay in for a number of days or weeks, depending on how much fluid collects over a 24 hour period. While you are in hospital, your output (the amount of fluid coming from your wound) will be measured over a 24 hour period and the bottle will be marked accordingly. This will be done at 6am and the ward nurse will record the measurement on a drainage chart.

At your pre-operative assessment the nurse will have asked you to bring in a suitable carrying bag to transport your redivac drain home.



Going home

If you are discharged home with a redivac drain, it is important to measure the 24 hour output at the same time each day, at a time convenient for you, such as in the morning. Your ward nurse will show you how to measure the drainage before you leave hospital (see picture 1). The nurse will tell you when you need to come back to hospital for an assessment and/or removal of the drain.

The redivac drain bottle may need changing for a number of reasons, such as when the bottle is full, if the vacuum indicator is completely expanded (indicating that there is no suction left) or if the tubing disconnects.

Remember to keep the drain at floor level to allow for the best possible drainage at home. If you experience any of these problems or have a query or concern about your redivac drain, please contact Sonning Ward (telephone numbers on the back of the leaflet).



Picture 2 (far left) shows the green concertina-like valve fully contracted which shows maximum vacuum or suction.

Picture 3 (left) shows the green concertina-like valve fully expanded which demonstrates minimum or no vacuum or suction.

General wound care

The dressings over the drain and wound site are generally splash proof or waterproof so you may shower when you go home. Do not remove these dressings as you will be seen by the surgical team, usually 10 days after surgery. They will remove the dressings and assess the wound during your appointment. However, if there is some wound leakage, the ward nurse would give you appropriate dressings to take home.

Please return the used fluid bottles back to the hospital for correct disposal either to the ward or to the outpatient department (where you will have your follow-up appointment).

Contacting us

Sonning Ward 0118 322 8204 / 0118 322 8458.

Breast Nurse Specialists: 0118 322 7420

Fiona Ellison

Sarah Cleaver

Vanesa Lobo

Maxine Halford

Further information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but if you have any concerns, please, in the first instance, raise these with Sister, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Relations Team on 0118 322 8338.

For more information about the Trust visit our website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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Revised: April 2020. Review due: April 2022