

# Drain Care Instructions

We use the drains during Plastic Surgery to decrease the risk of complications such as infection or fluid build-up (seroma) after breast implant surgery or abdominoplasty (tummy tucks).

“Drains are your friend!” Drains gently whisk away blood and wound fluid during the early healing period. They may seem intimidating, but they do not hurt, and they will greatly speed up the rate of healing after surgery. You will be instructed about drains in person at your preoperative visit.

## When you have drains in place, please remember the following:

- Do not shower with breast drains in place to avoid breast implant infection. We will instruct you on how to shower 24 hours AFTER breast drains are removed.
- You will be allowed to shower with abdominal drains after your first tummy tuck follow-up visit.
- Secure drains to your bra with safety pins or to your abdominal binder with the provided Velcro strap after surgery, rather than your pants to avoid pulling on them when you go to the bathroom.
- Remember to “milk” the drain tubes with an alcohol swab several times before emptying and recording drain output.
- See Dr. Horton’s drain instructional videos on our YouTube/drkarenhorton channel and our blog (search Drains)!
- Empty and record wound fluid 2-3 times per day. Record the 24-hour total in mL/cc on your drain log (provided at your preop visit).
- Notify Dr. Horton immediately if your drain is filling up with bright red blood rapidly (within an hour). An exception to this is the first night after abdominoplasty and liposuction - we expect large amounts of pink fluid the night after surgery.
- Please call our office at 415-923-3067 if your drains are producing more than 100 cc a day of thick, red blood. If you have any questions or concerns about your drains, please reach out. Our 24-hour answering service will direct your call to your surgeon after-hours.
- Drains are ready for removal in the office when the color is light and clear yellow and the total fluid output is Less Than 30 cc in a 24-hour period.

## Milking the drains:

1. Hold drain with hand #1 at the exit from the dressing to keep the drain from pulling out. Slide hand #2 down the tube holding an alcohol wipe for lubrication, compressing the tube as you go.
2. Release hand #1 and re-grab the tube where hand #2 is still compressing the tube.
3. Continue down the tube into the reservoir.
4. If there is a clot at the beginning, go over that part of the tube a few times

