

Flushing Your Drain

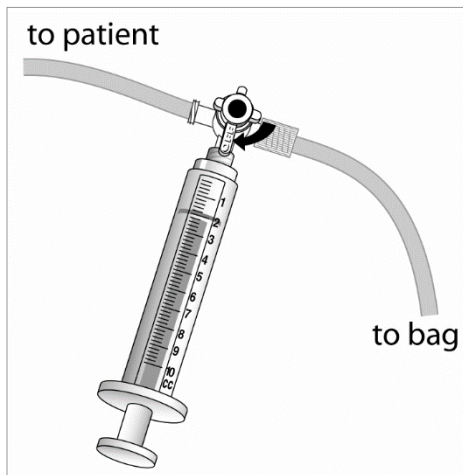
Your doctor may ask you to flush your drainage tube. In some cases, flushing the tube can help keep it from getting clogged or help it drain more fluid. You will use sterile normal saline (salt water) to do this. Your doctor will tell you how much normal saline to use and how often to flush.

Flush with _____ milliliters (mL) of saline _____ times each day.

Supplies

- Sterile 10 mL normal saline syringe
- Alcohol swab

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. Dry with a clean towel. Gather all your supplies and place them on a clean surface near you.



2. Scrub the safe site valve with the alcohol swab for 15 seconds and make sure valve does not touch anything after scrubbing.
3. Take the white cap off the saline syringe and push plunger on saline syringe to remove air before attaching the syringe.

Then gently screw the syringe onto the stopcock.

4. There is a lever on the stopcock. Turn the lever so that it points toward your drainage bag and away from your body.
5. Slowly push the plunger of the syringe to inject the saline into the tube going into your body. You may have a cool feeling while you are doing this. You should not have pain.

You should not have to force the saline in. **If the saline does not go in easily or if it is painful to flush, stop and do not continue to attempt to flush your drain.** Call Interventional Radiology and you will be told what to do.

6. Turn the stopcock lever so it points back towards the syringe.
7. Unscrew the syringe.
8. The safe site valve should be changed every 7 days or if soiled. This is done by twisting and removing the valve and replacing.
9. Keep track of how much fluid you flush into your drain.

When to Call

- Leaking around the tube
- Pain with flushing
- Trouble flushing the tube, or you feel resistance
- New redness, swelling or foul-smelling drainage around the tube site

- If your drain is accidentally pulled out, cover the site with gauze and then call
- Any questions or concerns

Who to Call

Interventional Radiology

Monday – Friday, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm

(608) 263-9729, option #3

Ask to leave a message for the
Interventional Radiology nurse.

After hours, call **(608) 262-2122**. This will give you the paging operator. Ask for the Interventional Radiology Resident on call. Give your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

Toll-free number: **1-800-323-8942**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 10/2024. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5721.