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## Going Home with a Chest Tube and Pleur-evac<sup>®</sup> Drainage Unit

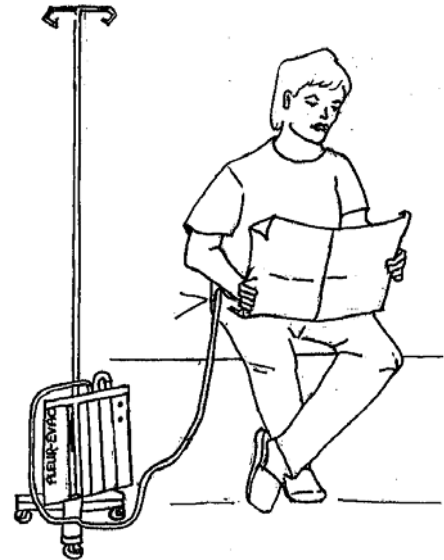
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### What is a Pleur-evac Drainage Unit?

A Pleur-evac Unit collects drainage from a chest tube.

### Is there any special care I should know about?

Try not to worry about going home with a Pleur-evac Unit. Most people find it easy to look after themselves with the help of the visiting nurses.



### Follow these guidelines to help you look after yourself:

- Ask your doctor what special drainage signs you should watch for. Your doctor may want you to call if the drainage changes colour or increases a lot.
- Keep the Pleur-evac Unit upright. If it falls over, stand it up again. It will continue to drain. The next time the nurse visits, tell the visiting nurse that the unit fell over.
- Keep the Pleur-evac Unit below chest level to promote drainage by gravity. Make sure the unit is below chest level when you are sitting, standing, lying down and walking.
- Always keep 2 orange clamps close by. If any tube becomes disconnected, clamp the tubing closest to your body with both clamps. Call your doctor for directions. You may need to go to the Emergency Room if the problem cannot be solved.
- Check the tubing often to make sure it is not kinked. When the tubing is kinked, you will not drain properly and you may have some trouble breathing.

- You may shower with the chest tube. Cover the area where the chest tube comes out with a small plastic bag and tape it well. Bring the unit to the shower area and leave it outside the shower curtain or door. The unit should never be under the direct flow of water.

You may want to shower just before the visiting nurse comes. Then the nurse can check the site and apply a new dressing. You will have to talk to your visiting nurse to arrange your shower time with your nursing visit.

## **Pain Control**

Take pain control medication as directed by your doctor or visiting nurse. If you have increased pain or discomfort contact your doctor or visiting nurse.

## **Exercise and Activity**

Gentle exercise such as walking is important to help your breathing and circulation. You should talk to your doctor about any other activity and exercise you want to do.

## **Contact your doctor if you have:**

- a temperature of 38.3°C or 101°F or higher
- an incision that is getting redder, has opened or has discharge
- bright red drainage or any other colour change in the drainage
- a sudden increase in the amount of drainage such as 100 mls or more
- pain that gets worse
- trouble breathing
- questions or concerns



## What should I do if the chest tube falls out?

The chest tube is stitched to your skin and taped well so the tube should not fall out. If the chest tube does fall out, **do not panic**.

### Follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Open the package of vaseline coated gauze.
3. Open the package of square gauze.
4. Cover the wound with the vaseline gauze and then the square gauze.
5. Put the elastoplast tape over the gauze.
6. After you have covered the site, call your doctor for directions.  
Your doctor will decide if you need to be seen or go to the nearest Emergency Department to be checked.



**Talk to your visiting nurse or your doctor any time you have questions or concerns.**

