

Specific Care for Jackson-Pratt (JP) Drains

A JP drain (often called a bulb or grenade drain) is a closed system that uses gentle negative pressure (suction) to pull fluid from the surgical site, preventing fluid accumulation (seroma) and promoting healing. **Maintaining the suction and protecting the drain is critical.**

Essential Drain Protection and Monitoring

- **E-Collar is Mandatory:** Your pet **must** wear the E-collar (cone) **at all times**. Chewing or dislodging the drain can lead to infection, surgical complications, or require another procedure to retrieve a broken piece.
- **Secure the Bulb:** The drain bulb should be secured to your pet's bandage or a protective garment (like a specialized surgical shirt) using tape or a safety pin (careful not to pierce the tubing). The bulb must **never** be allowed to dangle, which could create traction and pull the drain out.
- **Drain Volume Log:** You must **measure and record** the total volume of fluid removed from the drain at each emptying time. This daily volume helps Dr. Korani determine when it is safe to remove the drain (usually when the volume drops below a specific threshold, e.g., 1–2 mL/kg/24 hours).

How to Empty and Reactivate the JP Drain (Maintain Suction)

You should empty the drain **3 to 4 times daily** (approximately every 6–8 hours) or whenever the bulb is about **half full**.

1. **Preparation:** Always **wash your hands thoroughly** with soap and water before and after touching the drain system. Disposable gloves are recommended.
2. **Emptying:**
 - Open the plug (stopper) on the drain bulb. **Avoid touching the inside of the plug or the opening.**
 - Pour the fluid from the bulb into the provided measuring cup. **Record the amount and time.**
3. **Reactivation (The Suction):**
 - After emptying the fluid, squeeze the empty bulb completely flat to push all the air out.
 - While keeping the bulb compressed (flat), **replace the plug securely.**
 - When you release your compression, the bulb should remain flat. This confirms the vacuum (suction) is working.
 - If the bulb immediately fills with air, the plug is not secured, or there is a leak—check the connection and try again.

Preventing Drain Clogs (Milking the Drain)

Clots or debris can sometimes block the tubing, stopping the flow. You may need to "milk" the drain to clear these blockages:

1. **Stabilize:** Use one hand to firmly **pinch and hold the tubing** close to where it enters the skin. This prevents tension on the surgical site.
2. **Clear the Tube:** Use the thumb and index finger of your other hand to firmly pinch the tubing just below your stabilizing hand. **Slide these fingers firmly down the tubing toward the bulb**, pushing any clotted material into the bulb.
3. **Repeat:** Repeat this motion until the tubing is clear.

When to Contact H&M VetSurg Regarding the JP Drain

Call **415-853-7600** immediately if you observe any of the following:

- **Sudden Increase in Drainage:** The fluid volume suddenly increases significantly after the first 24–48 hours, or the color turns bright red.
- **Loss of Suction:** The drain bulb does not stay compressed (flat) after being emptied and replugged.
- **Drainage Stops:** The drain stops producing fluid entirely, and you cannot clear a blockage by milking the drain.
- **Excessive Leakage:** A large amount of fluid is leaking from the skin around the drain site.
- **Drain Removal:** The drain tube is pulled out or accidentally disconnected from the bulb.