



Saskatchewan  
**Health Authority**

# Pleural (Chest) Drainage

Using a MED-RX® Bottle  
Step-by-Step Instructions

FOR TRAINING PURPOSES ONLY  
July 27, 2026



CS-PIER-0361  
AUGUST 2026

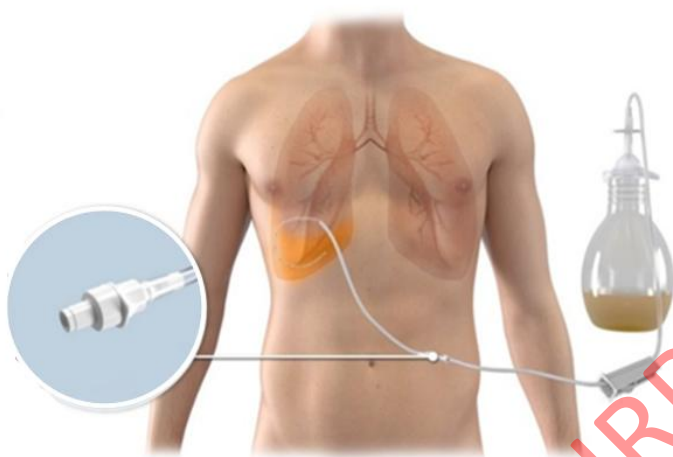


[saskhealthauthority.ca](https://saskhealthauthority.ca)

## Directions for Pleural (Chest) Drainage

### MED-RX® Bottle

The bottles may vary by brand (example: PleurX™, Med-RX®), but the tube coming from your body is the same. Use these directions for the Med-RX® bottle.



**Figure 1.** Pleural drain placement. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).



**Figure 2.** Med-RX Vacuum Bottle. Image used with permission from Canadian Hospital Specialties Ltd.

- Follow your doctor's instructions. Drain your chest every \_\_\_\_\_ days and do not remove more than \_\_\_\_\_ mL each time.
- **ONLY** use the hard plastic drainage bottle. **Never use a bag to drain your chest. Using a bag can cause serious harm or death.**
- You should have a support person with you during all parts of your chest drainage.
- You have been given an emergency kit. Keep it in a safe place where you can easily access it.
- Your healthcare provider changes your dressing every week or as needed.
- Check your oxygen level, blood pressure, and heart rate before draining your chest.
- If you feel unwell, call your doctor, nurse or healthcare provider to ask if you should still drain your chest.
- Please refer to [PleurX™/PeritX™ Catheters - Discharge Instructions \(CS-PIER-0362\)](#) for further information.
- Next dressing change due:  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Transcribed information reviewed for accuracy and confirmed by healthcare provider

CS-PIER-0361

## Drainage Instructions for Pleural (Chest) Drainage

You **MUST** follow the MED-RX® bottle steps in the order they are listed. If you do not do the drainage correctly, it can cause serious and life-threatening problems.

**1** Gather your supplies and place them on a clean surface or table.

**2** Wash your hands well with soap and water or hand sanitizer for at least 30 seconds. Consider using a timer to ensure you wash for the full 30 seconds. Use a clean towel or disposable paper towel to dry your hands.

**3** Remove only the dressing around the catheter cap. Gently remove the tape and unwrap the gauze so you can see the cap. **Do not remove the dressing where the tube goes into your body. Your healthcare provider changes this dressing every week, or sooner if needed.**



Figures 3 to 5. Removing partial dressing (pocket).  
Original images. Saskatchewan Health Authority. 2025.

**4** Wash your hands again as described in Step 2.

**5** Open the dressing kit by opening the clear package.

**6** Carefully unfold the white cloth to reveal a sterile dressing tray. **Do not touch any items on the white cloth with your bare hands as this is a sterile area.**



Figure 6. Opening sterile dressing kit. CareFusion. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).

**7** Open the package. Take out the bottle wrapped in plastic from the outer package.

**8** To access the bottle, tear the inner plastic down the middle and take out the bottle.

9 Hang the bottle on a surface with the support ring. **Make sure the bottle is below the point where the tube enters the body so the fluid can flow easily.**

10 Carefully place the tip of the bottle tubing on the center of the white sterile cloth.

11 Wash your hands again as described in Step 2.

12 Put on the gloves that are in the sterile dressing tray.



Figure 7. Applying sterile gloves. Image used with permission from CHS.

13 Open the alcohol swabs in the sterile dressing tray. Lay the pouches down on the white cloth.

14 Close the roller clamp shut on the tubing by rolling the wheel down, away from the bottle.



Figure 8. Closing roller clamp. Image used with permission from CHS.

15 Take the catheter cap off the tube that goes into your body by turning counterclockwise (left). **Do not let the catheter touch anything when the cap is off.**

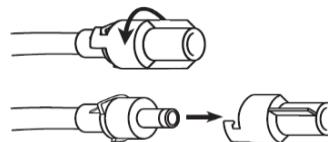


Figure 9. Removing valve cap. CareFusion. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).

16 Clean the end of the tube that goes into your body with an alcohol swab for 15 to 20 seconds. **Do not stick the alcohol swab in the tubing as this can damage it.** Hold the tube and allow it to dry.

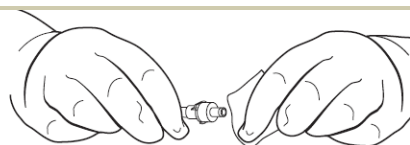
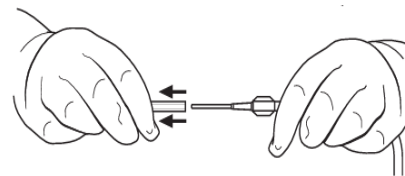


Figure 10. Cleaning catheter valve. CareFusion. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).

17

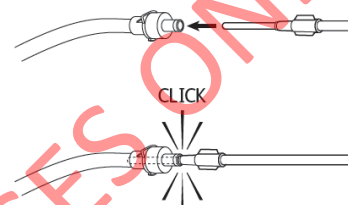
Remove the clear protective cover on the tubing that is attached to the bottle.



**Figure 11.** Removing sterile protective sheath. CareFusion. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).

18

Gently insert the bottle tubing tip into the tube that goes into your body. You will hear a “click”.



**Figure 12.** Connecting the drainage line. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).

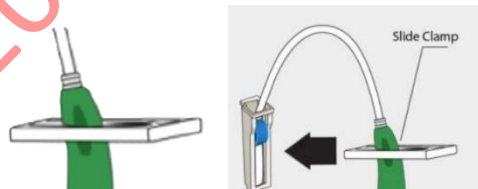
19

You can now put the connected bottle tubing down.

20

When you are ready, activate the vacuum:

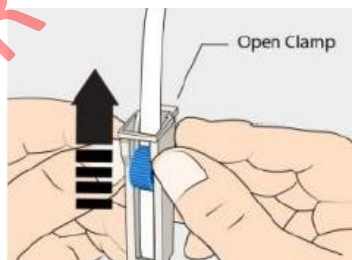
- Find the green rubber tube above the bottle.
- Slowly slide the white clamp on the green rubber tube forward until the tube is no longer pinched closed.



**Figures 13 and 14.** Activating vacuum. Images used with permission from CHS.

21

To start draining, slowly roll the wheel toward the vacuum bottle to open the clamp. **Roll the wheel up or down to make it drain faster or slower.**



**Figure 15.** Opening roller clamp. Image used with permission from CHS.

**SLOW DOWN** your drainage by rolling the wheel down if you experience any symptoms of discomfort, pain, shortness of breath, or cough.

**STOP** your drainage by rolling wheel completely closed if you feel too uncomfortable to continue drainage.

Call your healthcare provider if you do not feel better after drainage.

22

When you are done draining, roll the wheel on the roller clamp away from the bottle to close the tubing completely. It will stop draining when there is no more fluid to be drained or when the bottle is full. **Do NOT drain more fluid than what your doctor ordered.**

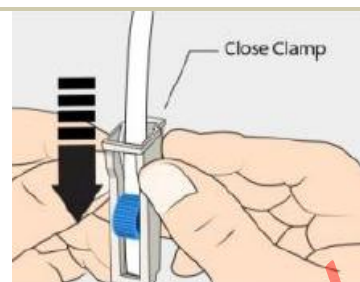
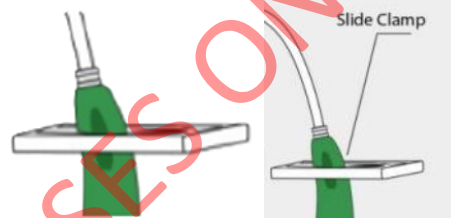


Figure 16. Closing roller clamp. Image used with permission from CHS.

23

Slide the white clamp forward until it pinches the green rubber tube.



Figures 17 and 18. Deactivating vacuum. Image used with permission from CHS.

24

Hold the tube that goes into your body in one hand and the tube that is attached to the bottle in your other hand. Pull the tubing tip straight out.

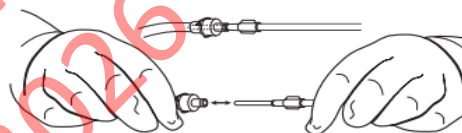


Figure 19. Removing access tip. CareFusion. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).

25

Clean the end of the tube that goes into your body with the alcohol swab for 15 to 20 seconds. **Do not stick the alcohol swab in the tubing as this can damage it.** Hold the tube and let it dry.

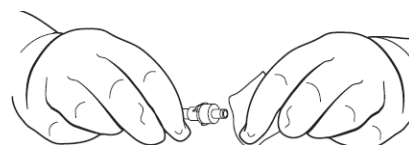


Figure 20. Cleaning catheter valve. Carefusion. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).

26

Place a new cap on the tube that goes into your body. Turn the cap clockwise (right) to lock it into place. You will hear a “click”. **Do not force the cap on as this can damage the catheter.**

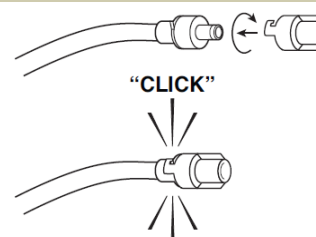
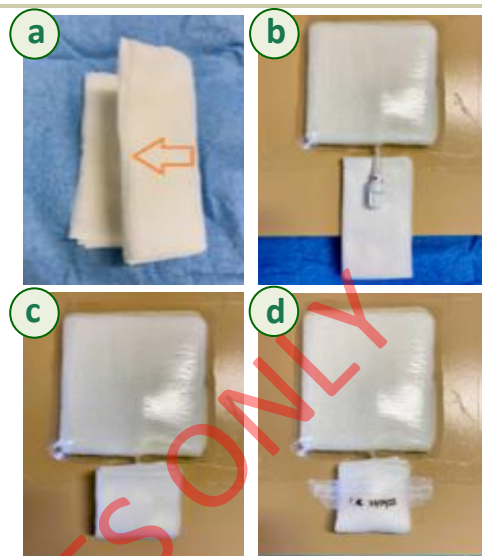


Figure 21. Applying sterile valve cap. CareFusion. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).

**27** Cover up the catheter cap area by making a new gauze pocket:

- a. Fold a 4x4" gauze pad in half.
- b. Place the folded 4x4" gauze pad under the catheter and cap in a vertical (up/down) position.
- c. Fold the gauze pad upward to cover the catheter and cap so that it cannot be accessed from the bottom.
- d. Use medical tape to hold the folded gauze pad in place. You can date and sign the tape, so that your healthcare provider knows when you last used your drain.



Figures 19 - 22. Partial dressing change (pocket). SHA [Interprofessional Practice]. 2025.

**28** Place the drainage bottle full of fluid into two garbage bags. Put it in the garbage or your hazardous waste bin.

**29** Remove your gloves.

**30** Wash your hands.

**31** Write the date, time, amount, colour, and any comments on your drainage record (next page). Show the record to your healthcare provider at your next visit.

## Emergency Kit Instructions

In the event of an emergency where you may have accidentally cut the tube or it has fallen out of your body, you **must** use the emergency kit provided to you and follow these steps:

### Accidental Cut to Tube

- 1 Pinch the catheter closed between your fingers.

- 2 Slide the emergency clamp over the tube into the small end of the clamp. This will close the line.

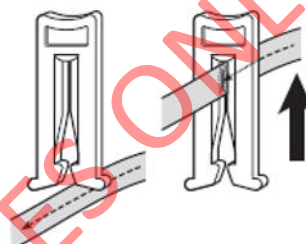


Figure 23. Clamping catheter closed with slide clamp. Image used with permission from Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD).

- 3 Cover the tube that goes into your body with a gauze pad and tape it in place.
- 4 Go to your nearest Emergency Department (ED) or call 911.

### Tube Dislodgement

- 1 Put petroleum jelly on a piece of gauze.
- 2 Put the gauze with petroleum jelly on to the site where the tube comes out of your body.
- 3 Go to your nearest Emergency Department (ED) or call 911.

**If you have any questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider.**

**This information will be located on your Discharge Instructions.**

## Drainage Record

[illegible]

CS-PIER-0361

# Drainage Record

[illegible]

CS-PIER-0361



CS-PIER-0361

### *Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan*

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.

## PIER—Patient Information and Education Resource

AUGUST 2026



Saskatchewan  
**Health Authority**



[saskhealthauthority.ca](https://saskhealthauthority.ca)