

# PTC Drain Care: What to do at Home

## The Biliary System

Bile is a liquid made by your liver that helps break down food.

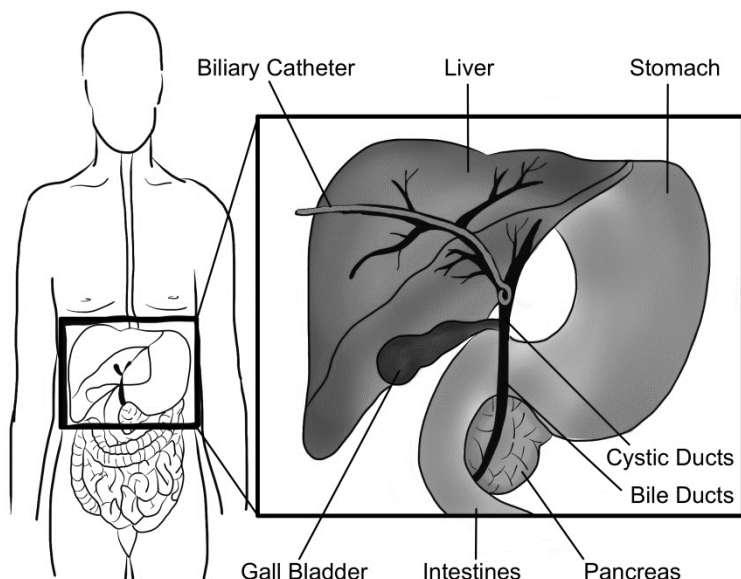
When your bile duct is narrowed or blocked by scar tissue or a tumor, bile cannot flow into the first part of your small intestine, called the duodenum. This causes the bile to collect in your liver. The build-up of bile in your liver can cause infection, nausea, vomiting, fever, itching, and jaundice (when the whites of your eyes and your skin look yellow). A drain or stent can be put into a biliary duct so the bile can drain out of the body.

Biliary drainage is a thin to thick, golden yellow, brown, or green liquid.

## Biliary Drain/Stent Placement or Exchange

### Types of Biliary Drainage Devices

1. **External Biliary Drain:** A thin, flexible tube called a catheter that runs from outside your body into a bile duct (see picture below) Also called a **Percutaneous Transhepatic Catheter** or PTC.
2. **Internal/External Biliary Drain:** A catheter that runs from outside the body to the bile duct and then into the small intestine.
3. **Biliary stent:** A metal mesh tube that is placed from the bile duct to the small intestine.

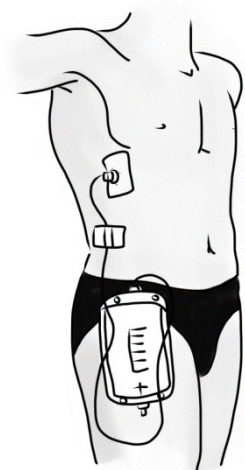


## Follow-Up Care

- External biliary tubes are usually changed every 2-3 months to keep them open and prevent infection. Your treatment plan may differ, so don't be alarmed if you are called sooner to schedule a tube change.
- Your doctor will set the schedule for your tube change appointment. Call your doctor if you have any questions about when you should be seen.

## Caring for your Catheter Drain

- Inspect the external tube often for kinks, especially if the dressing is wet and leaking bile.
- Write down the color of the bile and how much is in the bag every time you empty the drainage bag. There's a useful chart on the last page.
- Empty the bag as often as needed, or when it is halfway full.
- Empty the drainage bag through the spout at the bottom of the bag. **DO NOT** disconnect the tube from the bag.



Keep the bile bag below the insertion site so it will drain easily.

## Flushing the Tube - ***ONLY DO THIS IF INSTRUCTED BY YOUR DOCTOR***

Your discharge nurse will give you some prefilled normal saline flush syringes and a prescription to get more at your pharmacy.

### How to flush your tube

1. Place paper towel or clean washable towel under the tube
2. Hold the end of the tube stable and disconnect drainage bag from the tube by gently turning drainage bag tubing to the left.
3. Once disconnected, connect the flush syringe by attaching it to the end of the tube turning clockwise. Push the plunger slowly until you've added the amount ordered by your doctor.
4. Disconnect the syringe and reconnect the bag.

## Tube Problems

- If the skin around the catheter becomes red and sore, it may be a skin infection. If the symptoms do not go away in 2 days, call your doctor.
- If you experience any of the below symptoms, call your doctor
  - Pain on the right side of your upper abdomen
  - Nausea and vomiting
  - Fever and chills
  - Jaundice (yellow skin and eyes)
  - Tube leakage at insertion site

If your catheter falls out, do not attempt to reinsert it yourself. Call the hospital as soon as possible during the day or evening. If it is late at night, call at 8 am. If it is late but you have a fever, chills, or upper abdominal pain, contact Roswell Park's Central Access Center at **716-845-2300** and they will assist you.

## Living with a Catheter Drain

Bathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You can shower 24 hours after your drain has been placed.</li><li>• Leave the dressing on in the shower and put a new dressing after your shower</li><li>• Do not soak in the bathtub, use a spa, or go swimming while you have a drain in place</li></ul>
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Resume your normal activities as tolerated (If pain gets worse or you have new pain – stop)</li><li>• Keep the tube secure at all times (You can tape it to your skin) and avoid tugging on it.</li></ul>
Dressing Care	<p>Change the dressing at least every 2 days and after every shower</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water</li><li>• Take off the old dressing and discard</li><li>• Check if the skin around the drain is red, swollen, or tender. Check if the drainage is bloody or has a foul smell</li><li>• Clean the insertion area (where the tube goes into the skin) with normal saline. Pat dry gently with gauze.</li><li>• Cover the site with 2x2 gauze and Tegaderm dressing (Tegaderm™ is the clear dressing)</li></ul>

## Record Your Drainage

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