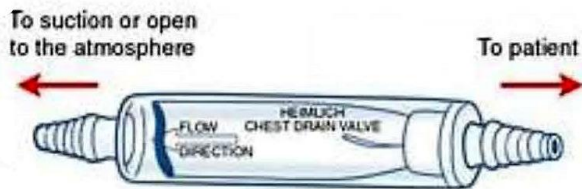


## Discharge Instructions: Heimlich Valve/Chest Tube

A Heimlich valve is attached to your chest tube to let air and fluid move out (drain) through the chest tube when you breathe out. It is a one-way valve so it will not let air in when you breathe in. One end is attached to the chest tube (shown as “to patient” in the diagram) and the other end is left open to the air.



**Since you live nearby, you can go home with this valve in place but you must have an adult with you in case you need to return to the hospital.**

### What to Expect

- Some pain/soreness at the chest tube site.
- Sleeping in a recliner may be more comfortable.
- Bathing: You can have a sponge bath. Do not swim or soak in a bathtub or hot tub while you have a chest tube. **Do not put the Heimlich valve into/under the water.**
- **You Can...**
  - ✓ take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or other prescribed pain medications
  - ✓ restart all your medications (except medications that interfere with blood clotting such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and ‘blood thinners’)
  - ✓ return to your normal diet
- **Do NOT...**
  - ✓ drive or drink alcohol
  - ✓ use tobacco products
  - ✓ perform strenuous activity or lift anything heavier than 10 pounds
  - ✓ take blood thinners including aspirin and ibuprofen
- **Wound Care**
  - ✓ Do not disconnect the Heimlich valve from the chest tube to try to clean it or remove fluid.
  - ✓ Always wash your hands before and after touching your bandage.
  - ✓ Keep the bandage clean and dry that is covering the chest tube.

### Instructions/Restrictions in Caring for your Valve and Chest Tube

- Never clamp the chest tube unless told to do so by your doctor.
- Never block the end of the valve; air/fluid needs to flow out. If there is drainage, put a gauze pad at the end of the valve. This will absorb the drainage but continue to let out the air.

*Continued on next page*

## Instructions/Restrictions in Caring for your Valve and Chest Tube - continued

- Keep the connection between the chest tube and Heimlich valve securely taped.
- You may see some fluid inside the tubing This is normal.
- It is normal to hear a fluttering noise – it means the valve is working! The sound is caused by air passing through the valve.

## Follow up

You will return in the morning for a chest x-ray.

## Call 911 or go to the nearest ER if you have:

- trouble breathing, shortness of breath, chest pain

## Call Us Immediately if:

- you can't reconnect the Heimlich valve
- the chest tube falls out
- a lot of fluid is draining from your chest tube

Diagnostic Radiology Department (Monday-Friday, 8a.m. – 4 p.m.): **716-845-5992**

Roswell Park Main Numbers (Available 24/7):

**Local: 716-845-2300**

**Toll-free: 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355)**