

Taichung Armed Forces General Hospital
Leaflet of Inpatient Nursing Instructions

胸腔引流管之護理指導

Sir/Lady:

Nursing instructions for chest drain care

I. Purpose: This procedure is typically used after thoracic surgery or for treating empyema or pneumothorax to drain fluid accumulated in the chest cavity.

II. Steps:

- (1) Complete the consent form.
- (2) Position the patient in a semi-sitting posture, exposing the insertion site for the tube.
- (3) Disinfect the skin and place a sterile drape.
- (4) After local anesthesia, insert the chest tube and connect it to a drainage bottle.
- (5) Close the wound, secure the chest tube to the skin with sutures, cover with a 4x4 Y-shaped gauze, and then secure the wound and chest tube with adhesive tape.

III. Precautions:

- (1) The chest drain must always be placed lower than the chest tube insertion site. If using an underwater sealed drain, the tube should be submerged about 2.5-3 cm in sterile saline to allow smooth drainage. Additionally, rehabilitation exercises should be done to enhance lung function recovery.
- (2) Turn the patient every two hours while allowing the patient cough and take deep breaths to help expand the chest and promote chest tube drainage.
- (3) Ensure the chest tube is properly supported. Do not pull on it, and maintain a comfortable position, correct drainage angle, and optimal breathing condition to aid recovery.
- (4) The color and amount of the fluid drained from chest will vary depending on individual conditions (typically, after open chest surgery, the lungs expand fully in 2-3 days when the fluid drained turns light red). When the daily drainage volume is less than 50-100 ml, and the chest X-ray shows improvement, the doctor may consider removing the chest tube.
- (5) Sutures are typically removed 7-10 days after tube removal.
- (6) Medical professionals will disinfect and change the dressing as needed, observing for any signs⁵ of inflammation such as redness, swelling, heat, and pain, or pus-like discharge.

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- (7) Keep the wound dry before it has healed, and avoid touching water with the wound. If it becomes damp, inform the medical professional to have the dressing changed.
 - (8) If there is severe pain, inform the healthcare professional, and the doctor will assess the situation and prescribe medications to control the pain.
 - (9) If you have no other specific medical conditions, there are no special dietary restrictions. It is recommended to eat plenty of vegetables and fruit⁵ to prevent constipation due to reduced physical activity.
- IV. The chest drain is an important tube for draining accumulated fluid from the patient's chest cavity. Please avoid pulling on the tube to avoid dislodgement. If the patient is not fully conscious or shows the intention (or action) to pull on the tube, please cooperate with the nurse to appropriately restrain the patient's hands to prevent the tube from being dislodged.

If you are still unclear about something or have any questions, please contact the nursing station in the ward