



Gallbladder or biliary tube Information for patients

This brochure describes how to take care of your tube at home. After reading the information, speak with your doctor or nurse about any questions or concerns.

Your tube is a: Gallbladder tube External biliary tube Internal/external biliary tube

Date tube was inserted: _____

Follow up appointment:

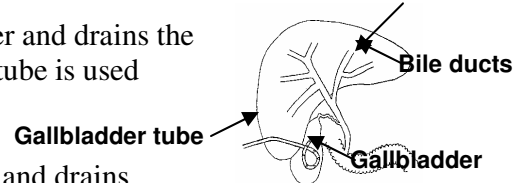
- Your appointment is scheduled for _____ with Dr. _____.
- Call interventional radiology at 617-667-2101 to schedule an appointment
- Call the Transplant Center at 617-632-9700 to schedule an appointment.

What is a gallbladder or biliary tube?

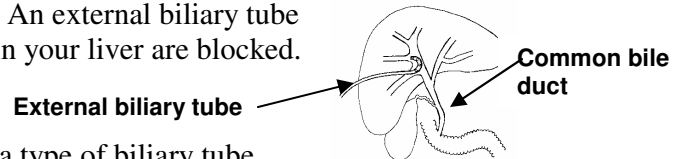
Bile is a fluid produced in the liver that helps with the digestion of fats. Bile travels through the liver in small tubules called bile ducts. The bile ducts join to form the common bile duct, a tubule which carries bile from the liver to the small intestine. Excess bile is stored in the gallbladder, a small sac-like organ next to the liver. When needed, bile from the gallbladder is transported to the small intestine through the common bile duct.

A number of different conditions can cause bile ducts to become blocked. Once the bile ducts are blocked, bile is unable to flow into the small intestine and builds up in the liver and gallbladder. When this happens, your doctor must place a thin tube through the skin to drain the bile. Different kinds of tubes may be used depending on the location of the blockage:

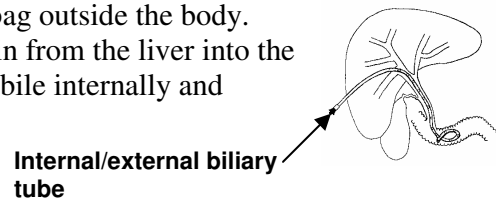
- A *gallbladder tube* is placed into the gallbladder and drains the bile into a bag outside the body. A gallbladder tube is used when your gallbladder is infected.



- An *external biliary tube* is placed into the liver and drains the bile into a bag outside the body. An external biliary tube is used when the bile ducts that drain your liver are blocked.



- An *internal/external biliary tube* is a type of biliary tube that is passed into the liver, past the blockage in the bile ducts, and into the small intestine. It may or may not be connected to a bag outside the body. The internal/external tube can allow bile to drain from the liver into the digestive tract. If a bag is attached, it can drain bile internally and externally at the same time.



information

How long will I need a tube?

The amount of time the tube needs to stay in varies from person to person. Some people need a tube for only a short time, while others may need it a bit longer. Speak with your doctor about how long you will need your tube.

Caring for your tube at home

Will I need help caring for the tube?

You might need help from a family member, friend, or home care nurse. Before you leave the hospital, your nurse will teach you and your family member or friend how to care for the tube. Your nurse will arrange for a home care nurse if one is needed.

What supplies will I need to care for my tube?

Supplies that you will need are checked below:

- Hydrogen peroxide
- Soap (liquid soap is best)
- Q tips, gauze, and tape
- Alcohol swabs
- Skin prep pad
- Two small containers and a pair of scissors that have been washed in hot soapy water and dried
- Prescriptions for 10cc syringes pre-filled with saline (if you need to flush the tube)
- Drainage bag

Your nurse will give you a starter set of supplies before you leave the hospital. Additional supplies may be purchased from your local pharmacy or from the Pharmicare Specialty Pharmacy in the Shapiro Building on BIDMC's east campus. The pharmacy's phone number is 617-731-8665. The Pharmicare Specialty Pharmacy usually fills orders for these supplies within 24 hours.

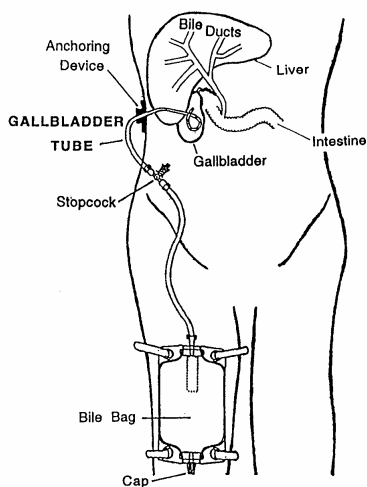
Changing the dressing

Your dressing should be changed at least every three days. If there is a lot of drainage on the dressing, you should change it more often. Follow these steps when changing the dressing:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water and dry well.
2. Gather together the materials you need to change the dressing.
3. Pour plain water into a container.
4. Have some soap available. (Liquid soap works best.)
5. Remove the old gauze dressing. Be careful not to pull on the tube or you could pull it out. It is best if you do not cut the dressing off because you might cut the tube. If you must use scissors, be very careful.
6. Moisten a Q-tip with liquid soap and water and gently clean the area where the tube enters the skin.
7. If there is a crust where the tube enters the skin, clean with a hydrogen peroxide solution. Pour equal amounts of water and hydrogen peroxide into another clean container. Use a Q-tip moistened with this solution to clean the area until the crust is removed.
8. Rinse the area with another Q-tip dipped in water.
9. Dry the area well with a gauze. Pat the area dry, do not rub.
10. Be sure the device holding the tube in place is still intact. If it isn't, call for help. (Use numbers on the last page of this sheet.)

11. If your doctor has instructed you to use “skin prep” pads on the area, use these now. Gently swab the area where the dressing and tape will be with a pad.
12. Cover the site with a new gauze pad. Use a gauze with a slit in the middle. (You may cut a slit into the gauze with clean scissors if needed.) Put the gauze next to your skin, bring the tube into the slit, and lay the tube on top of the gauze. Put another gauze over the tube.
13. Tape the top gauze in place, being careful not to place tape directly on the tube or on any stitches that you may have.
14. Wash your hands with soap and water and dry well after changing the dressing.

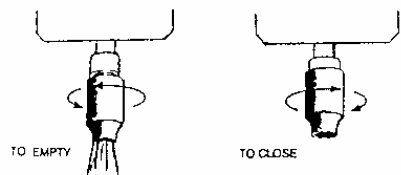
Emptying the bile bag



Gallbladder and biliary tubes may be attached to an external “bile bag” that holds bile drained through the tube. The bile bag should be emptied when it is about ½ full or before it gets heavy.

To empty your bile bag:

- Wash your hands and dry well before you begin.
- Unscrew the cap at the bottom of the bag and let the bile drain into a cup or other container. Allow the bag to empty completely.
- Screw the cap back up tightly to close.
- Follow the instructions as checked regarding your drainage:
 - Measure the amount of bile and then discard into the toilet. Record the total amount for each 24 hour period. Share this information with your doctor.
 - Discard the drainage into the toilet.
- Wash your hands again and dry well.



Important things to remember

Protect the tube to be sure it is safe from pulls and tugs:

- Keep the tube secured so it cannot pull back into the skin or get pulled out.
- Be sure the tubing does not kink or catch on your clothing.
- If you have a drainage bag, make sure it is secure and doesn't pull on the tubing. Empty the bag before it gets heavy or when it is about ½ full.

May I take a shower or bath while the tube is in place?

Follow these guidelines:

- Do not swim or take a tub bath while the tube is in place.
- After your tube has been in place for 24 hours, you may take a shower. Try to keep the dressing as dry as possible. Whenever you take a shower, protect the

dressing by taping plastic wrap over it. After the shower, remove the plastic wrap and change the dressing.

- *Always* change the dressing after it gets wet.

Call the doctor or nurse if you have problems

Call if you have any of the following:

- Fever of 101 or higher or chills
- Pain (including back pain) or excess leakage around the tube
- Your tube appears to be coming out. (If the tube comes out, save it and call us right away.)
- Your skin or the whites of your eyes become yellow or jaundiced
- The anchoring device or suture becomes loose
- You have trouble taking care of your tube
- Your bile stops draining or becomes bloody or cloudy (if you have a drainage bag)
- Your tube is capped, and you have pain or pressure at the site of insertion

If you have problems –
Please call the number next to the checked box for help.

- Dial 617-667-4700 and ask for the interventional radiology resident on call.
- Call the Transplant Center at 617-632-9700.

Changing the tube

Your tube needs to be changed if it is in for more than three months. This is a simple outpatient procedure. To arrange for a tube change, call one of the following resources (as noted by the check) at least three weeks before the tube needs to be changed.

- Call **X-Ray Special Procedures** at **617-667-2101** during regular business hours. Tell them the kind of tube you have and that you need to make an appointment for a tube change.
- Call Dr. _____'s office at _____. If you have questions, call the hepatobiliary nurse coordinator in the Transplant Center at 617-632-9700.
- Call your own doctor's office to arrange the appointment.