

NURSING 202 – ADVANCED CONCEPTS OF NURSING
CLASS PREP - CHEST TRAUMA: CHEST TUBES & DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

It is important for the nurse to provide competent care when the patient has a chest tube. Independently review chest tube care and answer the following questions.

1. What should be your focal assessments for a patient with a chest tube?

My focal assessment for a chest tube would include a respiratory assessment, assessing for tidaling and bubbling to make sure the system is working properly, assessing VS, pain level, the amount and description of the drainage, and making sure I have emergency supplies at the bedside if the tube would come out such as sterile water and gauze.

2. Define the term “tidaling”.

Tidaling is the normal fluctuation of water within the water seal chamber. It is the up and down movement of water that happens with inspiration and expiration.

3. Why might tidaling fail to occur?

Tidaling may fail to occur if the chest tube is blocked or the lungs have expanded.

4. Define/describe the term “bubbling”.

Bubbling within the chest tube is normal at the end of expiration and at normal peak inspiration with ventilated patients that happens in the suction control chamber. But nonstop bubbling could mean the system is not working properly.

5. What causes bubbling?

Bubbling can be caused by an air leak in the system

6. What is an acceptable safety measure regarding tubing connections for chest tubes and drainage tubing?

An acceptable safety measure regarding tubing connections would be to keep the chamber upright and below the site of insertion, keeping the clamp open as ordered and measuring the output as ordered.

7. What is the generally ordered suction pressure for a chest tube drainage system?

-20 cm H₂O

8. What pressure should you set the wall suction regulator to?

80-100 mmHg

9. What type of dressing would be used for a chest tube dressing?

The dressing type that could be used for a chest tube would be an occlusive petroleum gauze, sterile gauze and sterile tape covering where the chest tube is inserted.

10. Name 2 priority nursing diagnoses when providing care to the patient who has a chest tube.

Acute pain, impaired gas exchange