

Chest Tube Maintenance Key Points

1. Keep all tubes free of kinks and occlusions.
2. Keep CT below the level of the pt's chest.
3. Monitor effective suction and drainage.
4. Monitor that drainage is NOT $\geq 100\text{mL/hr}$. 100mL/hr is an emergency as you should notify the physician.
5. Assess respiratory status.
6. Administer pain meds for pain relief.
7. Do Not Strip CT!!
8. If CT becomes disconnected place the end of CT in sterile water and keep below level of the chest and get a new system.
9. If CT dislodges from pt. cover with petroleum jelly gauze or gauze taped on 3 sides only! **Why?** Then call the physician.
10. **Expected findings:** drainage system below the patients chest, may or may not be covered with occlusive dressing over the chest tube insertion site, and fluctuation of water in the water seal chamber.
11. **Unexpected findings:** drainage system leveled with patients chest or above, vigorous bubbling in the suction seal chamber (Wet system)