

# Suction drain

Placement of a drain during anterior cervicotomy for (ACDF/ACDR) did not limit the occurrence of symptomatic [postoperative hematoma](#) <sup>1)</sup>.

see also [Jackson Pratt drain](#).

[Wound](#) suction [drains](#) have been used to decrease the rate of postoperative [hematoma](#) formation and thus [wound infections](#) for many years throughout all surgical subspecialties. Although the use of surgical drains dates back to the years of Hippocrates <sup>2)</sup>, in the orthopedic literature these drains have not been shown to be beneficial in decreasing the rates of these complications, especially in orthopedic procedures including fracture fixation or [arthroplasty](#) surgeries. <sup>3) 4) 5) 6)</sup> However, these drains are still commonly used throughout the orthopedic community, including [spine surgery](#).

In spine surgery, the controversy of suction drains are profound because it decreases the rare but devastating complication of [postoperative spinal epidural hematoma](#), but it may have a hypothetical increase in the risk of [infection](#) <sup>7) 8)</sup>.

1)

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2)

Hippocrates The Genuine Works of Hippocrates Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins; 1939

3)

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4)

Lang G J, Richardson M, Bosse M J. et al. Efficacy of surgical wound drainage in orthopaedic trauma patients: a randomized prospective trial. J Orthop Trauma. 1998;12(5):348-350.

5)

Parker M J, Roberts C P, Hay D. Closed suction drainage for hip and knee arthroplasty. A meta-analysis. J Bone Joint Surg Am. 2004;86-A(6):1146-1152.

6)

Ritter M A, Keating E M, Faris P M. Closed wound drainage in total hip or total knee replacement. A prospective, randomized study. J Bone Joint Surg Am. 1994;76(1):35-38.

7)

Parker M J, Livingstone V, Clifton R, McKee A. Closed suction surgical wound drainage after orthopaedic surgery. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2007;(3):CD001825.

8)

Payne D H, Fischgrund J S, Herkowitz H N, Barry R L, Kurz L T, Montgomery D M. Efficacy of closed wound suction drainage after single-level lumbar laminectomy. J Spinal Disord. 1996;9(5):401-403.

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