4.6 Removal of an Underwater Seal Drain

Objectives

By the end of this section you should know how to:

- Prepare the patient for the removal of an underwater seal drain;
- Collect and prepare the necessary equipment;
- Remove the underwater seal drain.

Indications for removal of an underwater seal drain

Underwater seal drainage is a temporary measure and is removed when:

- Radiological examination demonstrates that the patient’s lung has fully re-inflated;
- Medical staff instruct.

Equipment

- Trolley
- Gloves
- Goggles
- Stitch cutter
- Sterile swab
- Normal saline
- Non-adherent dressing
- Large reinforced yellow bag and tie
- Steristrips

Procedure

- Perform hand hygiene;
- Collect and prepare equipment;
- Explain the procedure to the patient;
- Ensure patient’s privacy;
- Decide with colleague who will tie the purse string suture and who will pull the drain;
- Observe patient throughout this activity;
- Take down dressing;
- Perform hand hygiene and apply gloves;
- Separate purse string suture and cut anchor stitch; keep hold of drain;
- The person pulling the drain should direct when the patient should take a deep breath;
- Get patient to take a deep breath, pull out drain firmly and quickly and tie off stitch. Advise patient to breathe normally;
- Trim stitch, clean with saline and apply dressing;
- Ensure the patient is left feeling as comfortable as possible;
- Dispose of equipment as per Division policy;
- Perform hand hygiene;
- Document procedure and arrange a chest x-ray as soon as possible.
4.6 **Removal of an Underwater Seal Drain** cont.

**REFERENCES:**