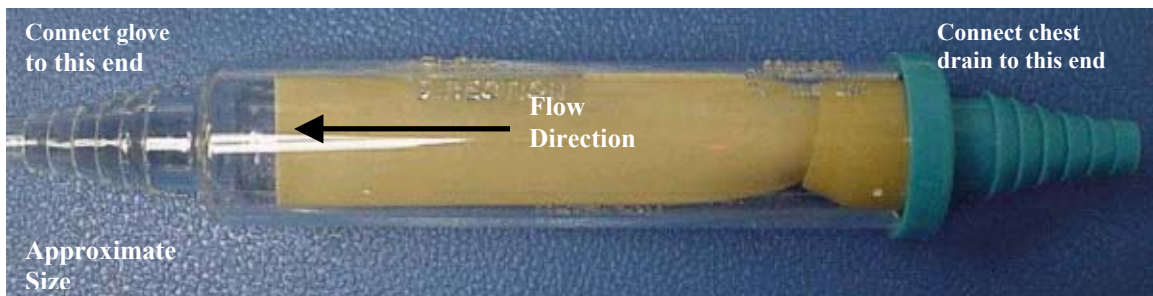




*Information for You from Your Health Care Team*

## HOME CARE OF THE HEIMLICH VALVE

The Heimlich valve is a one-way valve that allows air to flow out of your chest through the chest tube when you breathe out (exhale), but prevents air from entering your chest when you breathe in. The valve is connected to a chest tube on one end and the other end is usually attached to a glove (for collection of fluid) that has been slit to allow air out.



Care of the chest tube and Heimlich Valve:

1. Never clamp the chest tube or remove the flutter valve unless told to do so by the doctor.
2. Home care is set up – a visiting nurse will change the dressing and check the connections.
3. If there is a lot of drainage in the glove you may need to change the glove:
  - a. Place clear end of Heimlich valve inside the sterile glove
  - b. Secure the glove to the Heimlich valve with a rubber band
  - c. Cut a little slit at the top of the glove to let air out

4. No baths until chest tube is removed. Sponge baths are okay or you may shower on the days your visiting nurse is scheduled to visit. Shower just prior to her visit so she can change the dressing.
5. If the tape at the connection of the chest tube and valve begins to loosen, apply more tape.
6. Fluttering of the valve leaflet and/or a honking or duck-like sound is normal.
7. Chest tube and Heimlich usually stay in 1-2 weeks until leak is healed.
8. Return to office to have tube removed.
9. Dressing is then removed 48 hours after chest tube is removed.
10. Call your doctor if:
  - a. The tube falls out; cover site with a dry, sterile dressing immediately and call doctor
  - b. Shortness of breath or chest pain
  - c. Fever over 101 degrees
  - d. Any foul-smelling or cloudy drainage
11. Your appointment with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
at \_\_\_\_\_  
with / without chest x-ray.
12. Additional Instructions:

**Speak up if you have any questions or concerns**