Set Up

Step 1. Fill Water Seal to 2cm Line - Hold funnel down and fill to top. Raise funnel to empty water into water seal to 2cm line.

Step 2. Fill Suction Control to Desired Pressure Level - Remove vent plug, pour water to desired suction level. Replace vent plug.

Step 3. Connect Patient Tube to Patient - Connect chest drain to patient prior to initiating suction.

Step 4. Connect Suction to Chest Drain - Attach suction line to suction port on top of chest drain. Turn suction source on until constant, gentle bubbling occurs.

Have a question or need help in a hurry? Call Atrium toll free at 1-800-528-7486.

What To Check During System Operation

- Suction Control Stopcock
  Atrium’s suction control stopcock conveniently regulates vacuum to the chest drain. It provides effective control of suction control bubbling and allows efficient use with any unregulated suction source. The stopcock must be ON for initial system set up and should not be turned OFF during patient use. During patient transport or when suction is not operating, it is not recommended to turn the stopcock off or to clamp off suction tube.

- Verifying System Operation
  Water seal and suction control sections must be filled and maintained to prescribed levels to ensure proper operation and should be checked regularly when used for extended periods. Water seal should be maintained at 2cm line and suction control chamber should bubble gently when connected to suction. Adjust stopcock or suction source as needed to increase or decrease suction control bubbling.

- Placement Of Unit
  Always place chest drain below the patient’s chest in an upright position. To avoid accidental knock-over, open the floor stand for secure placement on floor or hang the system bedside with the hangers provided.

- System Disposal
  Disposal of system and contents must be in accordance with approved hospital infection control standards.
Troubleshooting

Q What happens when:

■ There is no bubbling in the suction control chamber?

A Check to be sure the suction tubing is connected to the chest drain and to the wall regulator and the suction source is turned on. Adjusting Atrium’s suction control stopcock is required for constant gentle bubbling.

■ There is vigorous bubbling in the suction control chamber?

A Vigorous bubbling causes quicker evaporation and produces excessive noise. Constant, gentle bubbling is all that is required to impose the prescribed amount of suction. Available on all models, Atrium’s suction control stopcock, located on the suction tubing, can be used to adjust bubbling. The suction source regulator can also be adjusted to turn suction control bubbling up or down.

Q Should the suction control stopcock be turned off for gravity drainage or for patient transport?

A No. The patient is protected two ways; first by the one-way valve created by the water seal to maintain the desired patient vacuum pressure, and second, the patient is protected by the integral positive pressure valve in the event the stopcock is turned off. It is not necessary to turn off the stopcock, clamp, or cap the suction line during gravity drainage or patient transport. Both the water seal and the positive pressure valve provide maximum patient protection when either the suction line or stopcock remain open or closed.

Q How can I connect multiple chest drains to one suction source easily?

A With Atrium models equipped with a suction control stopcock, connection of two or more chest drains to a common suction source is made easier. Place a 1/4” x 1/4” x 1/4” Y connector on the wall suction tubing. Cut the drain suction tubing where indicated in Illustration 1. Now invert the cut sections of suction tubing as shown in Illustration 2 and insert them into the suction tubing remaining on the chest drain.

Illustration 1.

Now you have two open ends of suction line tubing for the Y connector to be placed. Turn on suction and adjust Atrium’s suction control stopcock on each drain to achieve constant, gentle bubbling with each.

Illustration 2.

How do I confirm my patient has an air leak when there is:

■ No bubbling in the water seal?

A If there are no air bubbles observed going from right to left in the air leak monitor, there is no patient air leak. In order to confirm that your patient’s chest catheter(s) are patent, temporarily turn suction off and check for oscillation of the patient pressure float ball in the water seal column coinciding with patient respiration.

■ Bubbling present in the water seal?

A Whenever constant or intermittent bubbling is present in the water seal air leak monitor, this will confirm an air leak is present. Oscillation of the patient pressure float ball at the bottom of the water seal without bubbling will indicate no apparent air leak. Bubbling from right to left must be present to confirm an air leak. To determine the source of the air leak (patient or catheter connection), momentarily clamp the patient tube close to the chest drain and observe the water seal. If bubbling stops, the air leak may be from the catheter connections or the patient’s chest. Check the catheter connectors and patient dressing for a partially withdrawn catheter. If bubbling continues after temporarily clamping the patient tube, this will indicate a system air leak requiring system replacement.

Q How do I lower the water seal column?

A Changes in your patient’s intrathoracic pressure will be reflected by the height of the water in the water seal column. These changes are usually due to mechanical means such as milking or stripping patient drainage tubes, or simply by deep inspiration by your patient after all air leaks have subsided. If desired, the height of the water column and patient pressure can be reduced by temporarily depressing the filtered manual vent, located on top of the drain, until the float valve releases and the water column lowers to the desired level. Do not lower water seal column when suction is not operating or when patient is on gravity drainage.

Q Is it normal for the patient pressure float ball to fluctuate up and down (tidal) near the bottom of the water seal column?

A Yes. Once your patient’s air leak is resolved, you will generally observe moderate tidalizing in the water seal column. Increases in intrathoracic pressure will cause the water level to rise (the ball rises) during patient inspiration and will lower or decrease (the ball drops) during expiration. This diagnostic tool will help to confirm patency of your patient’s catheter(s). Minor “bouncing” of the water seal level can also be caused by vigorous bubbling of the suction control chamber. To accurately assess patient catheter patency, momentarily occlude suction to stop the suction control chamber bubbling and observe the water seal’s physiological response.

Q How do I dispose of the system?

A Disposal of system and contents must be in accordance with approved hospital infection control standards.