

How to make a lined and reversible Mastectomy Drain Bag



Tell me about drain bags

Drain bags are worn over the shoulder to carry surgical drains following a mastectomy. We recommend 2 drain bags following a double mastectomy and 1 for a single mastectomy. The bags are worn over the shoulder or across the body. It is now common for individuals to be sent home with drains; these are sometimes in place for up to 2 weeks. Drain bags can be worn under clothes, meaning patients can still go out without carrying uncomfortable drains.

When finished these bags should measure 23cm wide and 27cm in depth. The strap is designed to be tied off through the tab so that the length can be adjusted and therefore suitable for ladies of different height.

You will need:

For the bag

- Cut 2 rectangles of fabric measuring 26 cm x 30cm in the main fabric and in the lining fabric.

For the adjustable strap -

- Cut a strip of fabric measuring 13cm x 8cm (tab)
- And another measuring 140cm x 8cm (strap)

To make the bag: -

1. Place the bag out fabric right sides together, sew along the side seams and lower edge using a 1cm seam allowance.
2. Do the same with the lining fabric but leaving a 15cm opening on one of the side seams (this is so that the almost finished bag can be turned through later).
3. For the tab, fold the rectangle in half, right sides together and sew down the 13cm length with a 1cm seam allowance. Trim the seam and turn the tube right side out, press.
4. Fold the tab in half and position centrally over the seam at one side of the bag matching raw edges. Sew into place.
5. To make the strap, fold in half down the length of the strip, press. Tuck in the sew allowance along the open edge and at one end, pin and sew. The finished strap needs to be 2.5 to 3cm wide.
6. As you did for the tab, with raw edges together sew the raw edge of the bag strap to the other side of the bag placing centrally across the seam.
7. Put the bag outer into the lining with right sides together and with the tab and strap tucked between the two layers. Sew around the top joining the two layers together and sew again over the tab and strap area to reinforce.
8. Turn the bag right sides out through the hole left in the lining and topstitch the hole closed.
9. Turn the lining into the bag and topstitch around the top edge to finish the bag off neatly.

Notes

1. The bags can be made from all sorts of fabrics, but it is best if the fabric is washable and not too heavy.
2. Two layers of cotton are probably ideal for bags to be worn underneath clothing (not too bulky), but a mix of heavier cotton i.e. cotton furnishing fabric plus a thinner cotton lining will make a structured bag which will be ok to wear outside of clothing. Try to use contrasting fabrics for the outer and lining layers, the bags should be attractive and not just practical.
3. Following a double mastectomy two bags would be needed and so making some bags in pairs would be ideal.
4. Please bear in mind that these bags need to be made from clean fabric and in a clean environment, they are to be given to women who have just had surgery, and may also be undergoing chemotherapy and as such will likely have a reduced resistance to germs.