

Instructions Following Incision and Drainage of an Abscess

An abscess around the anus develops as a result of an infection in glands within the anal canal. Although this infection usually does not become serious, occasionally it may reach the deeper tissues surrounding the anus. This results in the formation of a painful collection of fluid and pus. An incision and drainage of the infected fluid can relieve this pain.

Following the drainage of an abscess, there is approximately a 50-50 chance for the further development of a fistula. A fistula is the result of incomplete healing of an abscess. It is a tunnel beneath the skin which starts at the gland which caused the infection and runs to an opening outside of the anus. This causes persistent drainage. A fistula may result in the development of further abscesses in the future. It usually requires further operation.

Please note and follow these instructions for the care of your wound following drainage of your abscess:

1. A dressing has been placed over the wound. This should be left in place until your bowels move or until directed to be removed by your physician. This may be in the evening or next morning following drainage. At whichever time you are directed, the dressing should be soaked off while sitting in a tub of very warm water. You should then continue to take tub baths (sitz baths) with warm water three times a day for 10-15 minutes.
2. Avoid strenuous activity for the next eight hours in order to prevent excess bleeding.
3. Your wound may continue to drain a large amount over the next several days as the infection slowly heals. You may apply gauze dressing to the wound to protect your clothing. You may also use a sanitary napkin for further protection of your clothing. You may notice bloody discharge for the next four to seven days. It is important to keep your stool soft and moving daily. You may use a bulk laxative such as Konsyl, Metamucil, or Citrucel. If necessary, a tablespoon of Milk of Magnesia may be taken at bedtime.
4. It may take two to three weeks for the wound to heal. If the wound had not healed by this time, you may be developing a fistula.
5. Return to the office as directed by your physician for a follow up visit in _____ weeks.

Remember: Do not hesitate to call us at (404) 252-5669 if you have any questions or problems such as increasing fever, pain, or difficulty in urination.