

# Perianal Abscess Drainage

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## **What will my recovery from drainage of a perianal abscess be like?**

You have undergone a procedure in the office to drain an abscess. Local anesthesia similar to Novocain<sup>®</sup> has been used to help with pain control. There are no stitches, but there is a small piece of gauze where the abscess was drained. You will be given prescriptions for pain medicine. Fill it on your way home. Also buy a powder fiber supplement (Metamucil<sup>®</sup>, Citrucel<sup>®</sup>, Konsyl<sup>®</sup>, or Benefiber<sup>®</sup>), and a small bottle of Milk of Magnesia<sup>®</sup>. Pick up some absorbent pads or gauze for use at home. You should plan to keep your activity level light for the rest of the day and stay off your feet except for a short walk every hour while you are awake.

## **How can I manage my pain during recovery?**

When you get home, take one or two hydrocodone/acetaminophen tablets even if you are not having pain, since the local anesthesia will wear off in a few hours. Otherwise, use them as directed. You might find an ice pack over the anus (30 minutes on/30 minutes off) for the first 6-8 hours may reduce pain and swelling. Pain or sensations of muscle spasms may also be relieved by sitting in a tub of warm water. You can do this the day of the procedure if needed. If you haven't done so already, you should sit in a tub of warm water by the next morning. Gently remove any remaining gauze after about five minutes of soaking.

## **What else should I know about the days after the procedure?**

Pain is normal after the procedure but should subside quickly over the next few days. When your pain begins to subside, you can use extra strength Tylenol<sup>®</sup> instead of the prescription pills (not in addition to), but avoid aspirin for the

first two weeks. In addition to the medications, pain usually responds to soaking in a tub of warm water. You should soak in a tub at least twice a day until the drainage stops. Keep dry gauze over the area otherwise.

Many people are anxious about their first bowel movement. The best way to avoid a painful bowel movement is to avoid constipation and have regular, soft stools. This is most easily accomplished by using a fiber supplement powder and drinking plenty of water (8-10 glasses per day). Most importantly, you should have a bowel movement within 1-3 days after the operation. If you do not have a bowel movement the day after surgery, take 2 tablespoons (1 ounce or 30 ml) of Milk of Magnesia® before going to bed. If you still do not have a bowel movement the next day, take the Milk of Magnesia® again in the afternoon and before going to bed. If you have not had a bowel movement on the third day, use ½ bottle of magnesium citrate in the morning and ½ bottle in the afternoon. If you still have not had a bowel movement by the fourth day, call our office that morning. After bowel movements, sit in a warm water bath. In addition to being the easiest way to clean yourself after the operation, it will help to reduce any muscle spasm the bowel movement may have triggered.

A small amount of bleeding drainage is to be expected. If you notice and increase in the bleeding, place a piece of cotton gauze next to the anal opening and sit on a hard surface for 15 minutes. If the bleeding persists, call our office. You can begin your usual activities as you feel able. You should not drive as long as you are taking prescription pain medications.

### **When should I follow up with my doctor?**

The best time to call with routine questions is during normal clinic hours; however, someone is available 24-hours a day for urgent or emergency calls. Call immediately if you develop a fever >101.5 degrees, trouble urinating, or persistent bleeding more than about ½ cup. We will assess your progress 2-3

weeks after the operation. Call to make an appointment that is convenient for you within this time frame. The General Surgery Clinic number is 734-936-5738.

Disclaimer: This document is for informational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Talk with your doctor if you have Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options.

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