

## Information and advice following anal surgery



This leaflet is intended to supplement the advice given to you by your consultant and nurses after your surgery for any of the following procedures:

- Drainage of perianal or perirectal abscess
- Fistulotomy or Fistulectomy
- Anal \*seton placement with or without wound post-operatively.

*\*A seton is a thin silicone string (very similar to an elastic band) which is inserted into the fistula tract.*

Not all of this information may be relevant to your circumstances. Please discuss any queries with your doctor or nurse.

### **After you go home**

- **Bleeding** – you may experience some spotting of blood or minor oozing for a couple of days following your procedure. A light pad/ gauze can be placed over the wound/ seton, if necessary.
- **Pain control** – it is normal to be sore or uncomfortable for a few days following your procedure. You should take painkillers as prescribed/ advised.
- **Constipation** – you should avoid constipation. Take laxative/ stool softener as prescribed, or talk to your doctor.
- **Personal care** – you should keep the area clean and dry, avoid soap and perfumed products.
  - If you have had the area laid open, remove the dressing before showering. If the dressing is dry and not coming off easily, you can moisten it with water from the shower or have a \*Sitz bath. In the early stages after the operation, sitting in warm water can be very soothing.
  - If you have had a seton inserted, keeping the area clean and dry is sufficient. The fistula will continue to drain as before; this is a normal process for a number of weeks following placement of seton.

- Shower at least once a day and after each bowel movement. Use wet wipes if you cannot shower (i.e. you are at work, school, etc.).
- Use a hand-held shower and **flush out the inside of the wound**. Then, direct any shampoo, soap or loose hair away from the wound.
- Dry gently (pat dry), do not rub the area. Some patients find using a warm hairdryer to dry the skin more comfortable.

*\*a Sitz bath consists of 5-7cm of warm water in a bathtub or a Sitz bath kit (available in pharmacies). Sit in the tub with knees to chest and stay for no longer than 5 minutes.*

### **Why do you need to change the dressings/ gauze every day/a few times a day?**

- The wound location increases the risk of local infection as the dressing can easily become contaminated with bowel material.
- The dressing may not stay in place during physical activity due to the location of the wound, and it is difficult to get dressings to stick on wounds that are close to the anus.
- It is recommended to shower the wound, as the force of the water is ideal for flushing out the debris and hair.
- Keep the dry gauze dressing over the wound/ seton (tucked between the cheeks) and change when it becomes soaked with discharge from the seton/ wound. Frequent changes during the day will prevent surrounding skin breakdown and discomfort. Use barrier cream or sprays.

### **You should seek medical advice if you notice any of the following problems:**

- **Persistent bleeding** – You may notice traces of blood on the gauze or in the shower or Sitz bath. This can be controlled by applying pressure on the wound with clean gauze for 15 to 30 minutes.
- **Signs of infection** – Immediately inform your nurse if you experience increased pain, redness, swelling, or discharge. Contact your GP or visit your local Emergency Department if out of hours.
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For Advice: St James's Hospital, Route 2 Dressing Clinic – Phone: (01) 410 3891

(Monday to Friday 08:00am – 16:00pm). Outside of these hours, please contact your GP or attend your local Emergency Department.