

Information and advice following pilonidal sinus or abscess surgery

This leaflet includes general information about your wound care after your surgery.

Please make sure to speak to your surgeon or a nurse if you have any questions.

A pressure dressing (to help reduce bleeding) will be covering your wound immediately after your surgery. It should be kept intact and dry - **do not get it wet** in the shower or bath for the **first day (i.e. within 24hrs) following your surgery.**

Personal hygiene (after 24hrs, following your surgery):

- Keep your dressing dry and clean at all times to protect your wound.
- Remove the dressing before showering – if the dressing is dry and not coming off easily, you can moisten it with water from the shower.
- Shower at a minimum of 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 handheld shower and **flush out the inside of the wound**. Then, direct any shampoo, soap or loose hair away from the wound.
- You can take a *Sitz bath** if your doctor has recommended this.
- **Do not use** antiseptics and disinfectants (hydrogen peroxide, iodine, alcohol) to clean your wound as they might damage the tissue.
- Ensure that your hands are clean and apply the dressing as was demonstrated by the nurse (see below: Figure 1.)
- Removal of any hairs growing around the wound edges (within 2 cm) is recommended (use a razor carefully).

- If you are attending a nurse for dressings, shower before your next appointment if possible.

**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 every 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.
- It is recommended to shower the wound, as the force of the water is ideal for flushing out the debris and hair.
- **The wound must heal from the base upwards towards the skin to ensure that the skin does not heal over before the tract is healed - daily showers, sitz baths and dressing changes are of great importance.**

Figure 1. Correctly Applied Dressing and Contoured Into The Natal Cleft



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

- Persistent bleeding – Minor bleeding may happen during a dressing change, or you may notice traces of blood in the shower or Sitz bath. This can be controlled by applying pressure on the wound with a 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.

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.