

Information and advice following pilonidal sinus or abscess surgery

This leaflet includes general information about your <u>wound care</u> 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 (<u>after 24hrs, following your surgery</u>):

- 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 <u>at a minimum</u> 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 <u>flush out the inside of the wound</u>. Then, direct any shampoo, soap or loose hair away from the wound.
- You can take a *Sitz bath** if your doctor has recommended this.
- <u>Do not use</u> 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.

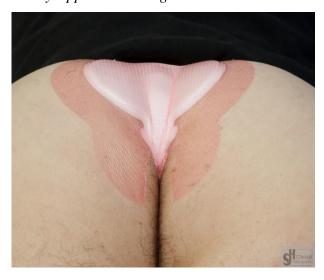


Figure 1. Correctly Applied Dressing and Contoured Into The Natal Cleft

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.

<u>For Advice:</u> 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.