

What is perianal abscess?

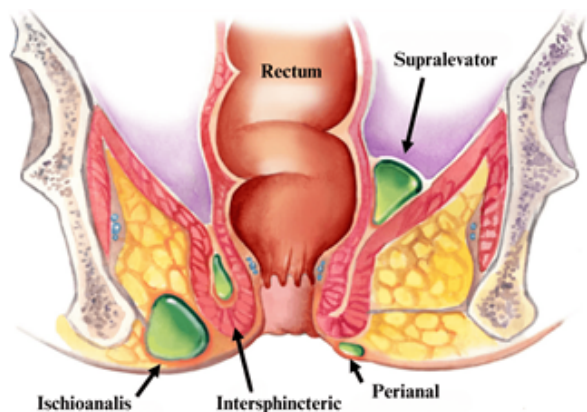


A perianal abscess is a painful collection of pus near the anus, typically caused by infection of the anal glands. Other common causes are:

- Inflammatory bowel disease (e.g. Crohn's,)
- Diabetes
- Immunosuppression
- Trauma or fissures
- Sexually transmitted infections.

Symptoms

- Constant throbbing pain near the anus
- Swelling or a red lump
- Pus from near the back passage (anus)
- A small opening near the back passage
- Fever or chills
- Pain during bowel movements
- Difficulty sitting.



Treatment



Antibiotics

Not always necessary unless:

- There's cellulitis (skin infection)
- The patient is immunocompromised

Incision and Drainage (I&D)

A small surgical procedure to drain the pus, usually done under local or general anesthesia. May be performed in an outpatient or emergency setting.

Post-Operative Care



- Shower at least once a day, and after every bowel movement whenever possible.
- If showering isn't practical (e.g., you're at work or school), use unscented wet wipes to gently clean the area.
- Use a hand-held shower and flush out the inside of the wound; direct any shampoo, soap or loose hair away from the wound.
- Avoid harsh soaps or scrubbing.
- In the early stages of recovery, a warm bath can be very soothing and help relieve discomfort; make sure the water is clean and not too hot, and limit the soak to about 10-15 minutes.
- After washing, gently pat the area dry with a soft towel—do not rub, as this can cause irritation.
- Some patients find it more comfortable to use a cool setting on a hairdryer to dry the skin gently.
- Monitor for signs of infection (increased/new pain, fever, foul discharge).

Understanding Your Daily Dressing Changes



- **Risk of Infection:** The wound is close to the anus, which increases the chance of contamination from bowel movements. This makes infection more likely if the dressing becomes soiled.
- **Dressing Challenges:** Dressings may not stay in place during movement or physical activity. It can also be difficult to get dressings to stick properly in this area.
- **Using Dressings:** Keep a dry gauze dressing over the wound, tucked gently between the buttocks.
- Change the dressing whenever it becomes wet or soaked with discharge.
- Frequent changes throughout the day help prevent skin irritation and discomfort.
- **Protecting the Skin:** Apply a barrier cream or spray around the wound to protect the skin from moisture and breakdown.

Frequently asked questions



Why isn't my wound being packed?

Historically, packing was used to keep the wound open and promote drainage. Recent evidence suggests no significant benefit in packing vs. not packing in terms of healing time or recurrence.

In addition, packing may not be necessary for all types of wounds. Your healthcare team will decide the best approach based on the location, depth, and type of wound, as well as how it's healing.

What should I expect after the procedure?

- Mild to moderate pain is common and should improve over a few days.
- Use prescribed pain medications as directed.
- The wound may be left open to heal naturally.
- Drainage from the site is normal until wound heals.

Can I shower or bathe?

Yes, you can have both. Remove gauze/dressings before and replace them afterward.

How do I manage bowel movements?

Prevent constipation by:

- Taking a stool softener (available over the counter).
- Drinking 8-10 glasses of water daily.
- Use moist toilet wipes instead of toilet paper
- Use bidet or take a shower after bowel movements if more convenient for cleaning.



When can I return to work or drive?

- Avoid driving until you can move comfortably and perform an emergency stop.
- Return to work depends on your job type – consult your GP or surgeon.

How long it will take for a wound to heal?

The healing process is individual and varies depending on many factors:

- underlying conditions
- your diet
- smoking
- activity
- following the instructions provided.

Which symptoms to report?



Contact your **GP or attend emergency department** if you are to experience same symptoms as before incision and drainage (the abscess may have reaccumulated) or if you are generally unwell (shivers, chills, fatigue, fever).

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Peri-anal abscess Self-Care Guide

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Outside of these hours, please contact your family doctor or attend local Emergency Department.

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