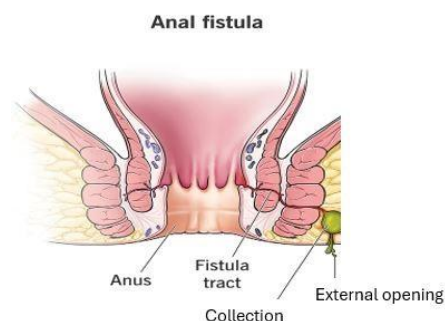


What is perianal fistula?

An anal fistula is a small tunnel running from the skin on the outside of the buttock/anal area to the inside of the anus. There are different types of fistulae from simple to complex branching ones. Some fistulae may run through the sphincter muscles (the ring of muscles that open and close the anus and are responsible for continence).

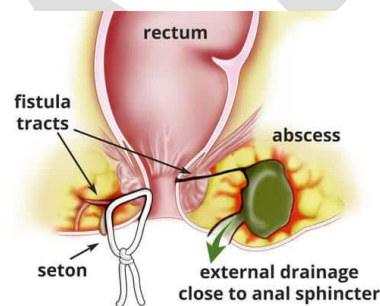


What is seton?

A seton is a special type of flexible drain that is passed through the opening in the skin, along the fistula track, and back out through the anus where it is tied loosely to form a loop with a knot.

Setons are used for:

- To control infection before definitive surgery as part of a staged approach to fistula healing;
- In complex fistulas where cutting through the tract could risk damaging the anal sphincter - the anal sphincter is a ring of muscle at the end of your bowel that helps you stay in control of when you pass stool or gas.



Caring for Your Seton

- Keep the area clean with daily showers or sitz bath (warm shallow baths for no longer than 5 minutes);
- Avoid using soap or perfumed products;
- Undertake gauze tuck between your buttocks changes regularly, to keep the

surrounding skin clean and dry and prevent skin irritation;

- Barrier cream can prevent skin irritation or be used when irritation occurs.

Daily Seton Flossing

Gently move your seton back and forth once a day to:

- Keep the area open so it can drain properly.
- Stop skin from tightening around the seton.
- Prevent blockages or infection.

FAQ

How long will the seton stay in?

It depends on your healing. Some people have it for a few weeks, others for several months. Your doctor will decide when it's time to remove or replace it.

Will the seton fall out or need to be removed?

Setons are usually removed or replaced during follow-up procedures.

If it falls out prematurely (this can happen from time to time), contact your surgical team as they might want to see you to

check the area and decide if it needs to be replaced.

Will it affect going to the toilet?

You may feel sore after bowel movements. Use stool softeners and drink plenty of water to avoid straining.

Can I bathe or shower with a seton?

Yes. Daily showers or sitz baths are encouraged to keep the area clean and reduce discomfort, especially after bowel movements.

Is it normal to have discharge or bleeding?

Some clear or slightly bloody discharge is normal. However, if you notice foul-smelling discharge, increasing pain and fever or chills you should contact your healthcare provider.

Can I go back to work or exercise?

Most people can return to work within a few days, depending on discomfort. Avoid strenuous activity or heavy lifting until advised by your doctor.

Pain management

It is normal to experience pain or discomfort for the first 7 to 14 days after the procedure. If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed. If you are not taking a prescription pain medicine, take your usual over-the-counter medicine (such as Paracetamol).

Which symptoms to report?



Contact your GP or attend the Emergency Department if your previous symptoms return (as this may indicate the abscess has re-formed), or if you feel generally unwell — for example, if you develop shivers, chills, fatigue, or a fever.

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ST JAMES'S HOSPITAL



Caring for Your Perianal Seton: A Patient Guide

This leaflet provides information and advice for your seton following treatment for anal fistula. Not all of this information may be relevant to your circumstances. Please discuss any queries with your surgeon or nurse.



*Scan the code for electronic version & clinic
contact details*