

Surgery for Pilonidal Disease: FAQ

What is pilonidal disease?

Pilonidal disease is a chronic infection of the skin above the buttocks crease.

How is it diagnosed?

A diagnosis of pilonidal disease is usually made by history and physical examination. On rare occasions imaging such as a CT scan may be needed to distinguish pilonidal disease from other conditions.

What can be done about it?

If there is acute infection or an abscess, this can often be drained in the office with local anesthetic. For chronic draining pilonidal cyst, surgery is often recommended.

My doctor recommended surgery, how much time do I need to take off from work?

You will need a whole day set aside for surgery and if you do strenuous work, you may need 2 or more weeks off unless your doctor specifically tells you that you may work. If you have a job that does not require strenuous activity (such as working at a computer or going to school), you may return to work or school once you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication. Often this operation is done on a Friday and many patients go back to school or work on Monday.

How should I prepare for surgery?

In the days before surgery, patients are recommended to eat well and get plenty of rest. Stop taking any medications that you were instructed to stop such as blood thinners or aspirin or Plavix.

On the day prior to surgery, you will receive a call from the hospital to confirm the time and the details of the planned procedure. Please be sure the hospital has the correct information. If you don't hear from the hospital call the office at 774-776-2991. **DO NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING AFTER MIDNIGHT.**

What can I expect on the day of surgery?

On the day of your operation, you should take your morning medications unless you have been told otherwise. You should arrive to the hospital at your specified time. You will be brought to the pre op holding area. Your family members will be escorted to the waiting area where your surgeon will inform them of the details of your operation if you give us permission to do so. If your family members are not going to be in the waiting room you will be asked how to best reach them so they can be informed after surgery. You will be seen by a member of the anesthesia team, the operating room staff, and your

surgeon. You will be given the opportunity to have any of your last minute questions answered. You will sign a consent form. Then, you will be brought into the operating room. The anesthesiologist will give you general anesthesia. From this point until the operation is completed you will be unaware of what is happening. The operation takes about one hour. When you are awakened you will be brought to the recovery room. We will allow you to recover from anesthesia and do our best to control any pain you might be having. Once recovered, you be permitted to drink clear liquids and then your diet will be advanced to a regular diet. Once you meet the hospital criteria for discharge, you will be discharged home.

What happens after I am discharged?

You should have a responsible adult available to drive you home. You should be with a responsible adult for about 24 hours. Upon discharge you will be given a prescription for pain medicine. Take this as needed. You may take Motrin, Advil, or ibuprofen along with the prescription pain meds. (Sometimes these work better when taken together).

Can I shower?

You may shower after 24 hours but you should avoid soaking in water for more than 10 minutes.

Are there any restrictions on my diet?

There are no restrictions on your diet. You should avoid alcohol while you are on narcotic pain medication.

My incision is closed with stitches. Are there any restrictions on my activity?

If your incision is closed with stitches, you should avoid strenuous activity or sports, bending, or anything that will put strain on your lower back. You may keep a dry dressing over the incision to prevent staining of your clothes. Even after your stitches are removed, you should restrict your activity for another 2 weeks.

My incision is open. Are there any restrictions on my activity?

If your incision was intentionally left open with marsupialization, then your activity can be as tolerated. You should pack the incision with gauze moist with saline and covered with a dry dressing and secured with tape. This should be done at least daily or whenever the dressing gets wet. The wound will heal over 6-12 weeks

When will I get my stitches out?

If closed with stitches, you should have your stitches out 2 weeks after surgery. Call the office to make an appointment.

What happens if my incision opens after the stitches are removed?

Almost all patients experience some bleeding after the stitches are removed. Dry gauze can be used to cover the incision. After sutures are removed, up to one third of all patients will have problems with their wound. Most often, a small opening will occur at the lower one third of the wound. If this occurs, it can be treated with local wound care. Call the office to make an appointment to be evaluated. Occasionally, the entire wound opens up. This may be able to be treated with local wound care and rarely requires re-operation. Some patient's may even be referred to a wound specialist if this is a required.

Can it come back?

Yes. Unfortunately, there is a high recurrence rate of about 30%.

Call the office:

- You have worsening pain or increasing the amount of pain medication required
- persistent fever or chills (you may have low-grade fevers on and off for the days following surgery, this is your bodies normal reaction to surgery)
- Redness around the incision more than 1/2 inch on either side.
- Drainage of cloudy fluid or pus (drainage of a yellowish bloody fluid is normal)
- Persistent nausea or vomiting
- To make a follow-up appointment for 2 weeks after surgery
- You have any other problems or concerns

Link to Post op instructions

For information from the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons

<https://fascrs.org/patients/diseases-and-conditions/a-z/pilonidal-disease>

Call our office with any questions or concerns

*Innovative Surgical Care
774-776-2991*