

Patient information factsheet

Abscess incision and drainage aftercare advice

We have given you this factsheet because you have had an abscess incision and drainage procedure today: _____.

This factsheet explains what to expect after your procedure. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the relevant healthcare service using the details at the end of this factsheet.

Please read this factsheet alongside the EIDO 'Abscess Incision and Drainage' patient information sheet we have given you.

Before you leave hospital

Before you leave hospital, we will give you:

- a copy of your consent form
- an advice sheet on what you should and should not do after your procedure
- follow-up advice
- a prescription (if needed)

We will also explain what we have done today.

Anaesthesia

For your procedure, you will have had either:

- a general anaesthetic (medicine that makes you go to sleep) **or**
- a local anaesthetic (medicine that numbs a specific area of the body)

If you have had a general anaesthetic and your doctor has deemed you well enough to go home on the same day as your procedure, you will need a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you overnight.

For 24 hours after the procedure, you must not:

- drive
- drink alcohol
- operate machinery
- sign important documents

Wound care

After your procedure, your wound will be covered with some dressings. The ward nurse may change these dressings for you before you leave hospital. However, if they do not, you will need to change these yourself 24 hours after your procedure. This includes changing any packing (special dressings) used inside your wound (please note that the packing may have a jelly-like texture). You may change your dressings earlier if they are very bulky or if they prevent you from opening your bowels. You should dispose of these dressings in your normal household waste.

Your wound will take between 6 and 12 weeks to heal fully. It is normal for your wound to leak some fluid while it is healing (this does not mean it is infected).

Please note that smoking or poorly controlled diabetes can increase the length of time your wound takes to heal.

It is important to keep your wound clean while it is healing. To help you do this, follow the steps below until your wound has fully healed:

1. Clean your wound daily with fresh, clean water.
2. Pat the area dry with a clean piece of kitchen roll, towel or gauze.
3. Apply a clean dressing to your wound to absorb any leaking fluid. If you find an adhesive dressing doesn't stick very well, use a small pad dressing instead.

If you have a perianal wound (a wound near the opening of your bottom), you may find placing a mirror on top of a closed toilet seat helps you to see the area better.

Medication

Antibiotics

Most people do not need to take any antibiotics (medication used to treat or prevent some types of bacterial infection) after their procedure. However, if your doctor thinks that you do need antibiotics, they will prescribe you a course and explain when and how to take it.

Flaminal® wound gel

Some people may be prescribed a medication called Flaminal® (a type of gel used to help heal wounds). This will depend on the type of abscess you have had treated. If your doctor has prescribed you Flaminal®, you must follow the instructions they give you.

We have included the below as a reminder.

1. Remove your dressing after **four** days (or earlier if it starts to peel at the edges or the gel seeps out the side).
2. Clean your wound thoroughly with fresh, clean water.
3. Pat the area dry with a clean piece of kitchen roll, towel or gauze.
4. Once your wound is fully dry, squeeze some Flaminal® into it before reapplying a clean dressing.
5. Repeat this process until your wound has fully healed.

If you need additional tubes of Flaminal®, please ask your general practitioner (GP) for a repeat prescription.

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Most people can care for their wound themselves or with the support of a family member or friend. However, if you're unable to do this, please contact your GP surgery for additional support.

Pain relief

It is normal to experience some pain and discomfort for approximately one week after your procedure. To help with this, you can take regular pain relief medication such as paracetamol or ibuprofen (remember to always read the label before taking any medication).

Occasionally, we may prescribe a stronger pain relief medication. If this is the case for you, please be aware that stronger pain relief medications can cause constipation (not being able to poo as often or finding it difficult to poo). To help with this, we will usually prescribe a laxative (a medicine that treats constipation) for you to take alongside the pain relief medication. Please take all pain relief medication as directed on the packet.

Returning to work

Most people will be able to return to work within a week of having an abscess incision and drainage procedure. However, this will depend on the nature of your job and the size and location of your abscess. Your doctor will discuss this with you in more detail.

Driving

You can resume driving when you are comfortably able to:

- perform an emergency stop
- turn around in your seat to reverse the car

We recommend contacting your insurance company for specific advice, especially if you are a professional driver.

Exercise

You should avoid strenuous activity or exercise for several weeks after your procedure.

Diet and nutrition

Eating a healthy, balanced diet that includes plenty of fruit and vegetables can help aid healing. For more information about eating a healthy, balanced diet, please visit:

www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/food-guidelines-and-food-labels/the-eatwell-guide

We also recommend taking an A to Z multivitamin supplement. You can buy this from any supermarket or pharmacy.

When to seek medical help

Call NHS **111** or contact the relevant healthcare service using the details at the end of this factsheet if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- bleeding from your wound which soaks through the dressings and does not stop after 20 minutes of applying firm pressure
- increased swelling and fluid leaking from your wound
- a fever (a temperature of 38°C or above), shivers and shakes or hot and cold flushes

In an emergency, go to your nearest emergency department or call 999 for an ambulance.

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Follow-up care

Most people will not need a follow-up appointment after having an abscess incision and drainage procedure. However, if you experience multiple abscesses, we may refer you to see a specialist. If this is the case, we will discuss this with you.

Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us.

For queries within 24 hours of having your procedure

Acute surgical unit (ASU)

Telephone: **023 8120 8124**

For queries after 24 hours of having your procedure

Contact your GP surgery or go to the minor injury unit at Royal South Hants Hospital.

Outside of working hours, call NHS **111** for advice.

If you are a patient at one of our hospitals and need this document translated, or in another format such as easy read, large print, Braille or audio, please telephone **0800 484 0135** or email **patientsupporthub@uhs.nhs.uk**

For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**

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