



# Pilonidal Cyst Surgery

*What to expect and how to prepare for your operation*

**This handout explains what to expect from pilonidal cyst surgery, how to prepare for your operation, and how to plan for your recovery.**

A *pilonidal cyst* is located in the crease between the buttocks. It is often a chronic condition. When it becomes infected or inflamed, it may be painful and drain fluid. If you have an infected pilonidal cyst, you may have it drained or take antibiotics. But, the only cure for this condition is to remove the affected tissue with surgery.

The surgical incision may either be closed at the time of surgery or left open to heal on its own. Your surgeon will decide based on the condition of the tissue, the location of the cyst, and size of the area affected.

## How to Prepare for Your Operation

### *Things to Remember*

- **Aspirin and other medicines:** Do **not** take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting for 1 week before your operation. Two of these are ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naprosyn (Aleve, Naproxen). See attached sheet for more information.
- **Shaving:** Do **not** shave any part of your body that you do not already shave every day. If you normally shave near your surgical site, do **not** shave that area for 2 days (48 hours) before your surgery.

## 24 Hours Before Your Operation

- **Take 2 showers:** Take 1 shower the night before, and a second shower the morning of your operation. Use the antibacterial soap your nurse gave you to wash your body.

Do **not** use the antibacterial soap on your face and hair. (See directions that came with the soap.) Use your own soap and shampoo on your face and hair. Use clean towels to dry off, and put on clean clothing.

**Remember:**  
**Do not take any aspirin or other products that affect blood clotting for 1 week before your operation.**

- **Arrival time:** The pre-surgery nurse will call you by 5 p.m. the night before your operation. If you are having surgery on a Monday, the nurse will call you the Friday before. If you do not hear from the pre-surgery nurse by 5 p.m., please call 206-598-6334.

The pre-surgery nurse will tell you when to come to the hospital and will remind you:

- Not to eat or drink after a certain time
  - Which of your regular medicines to take or not take
  - To sip only enough water to swallow your pills
- **Heating blanket:** To reduce your risk of infection, you will be covered with a heating blanket to warm your body while you wait to go into the operating room. Ask for a heating blanket if you do not receive one.

## **Precautions and Self-Care to Speed Your Recovery**

### *Pain Management*

Take your narcotic pain medicine as prescribed, or you can take over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol).

### *Changing Your Dressing (Bandage)*

**You need to change your original dressing the day after your surgery.** If you have any trouble changing your dressing, call the Nurse Advice Line at 206-598-4549.

- **If your incision was stitched closed:**
  - You will simply remove the dressing and replace it with dry gauze.
  - You will not be able to get your incision wet for 4 days. See “Showering” on the next page.
- **If your incision was left open:**
  - Your dressing was placed tightly to help control bleeding. Change the dressing the day after your surgery. This will keep it from getting infected. You may have some slight bleeding at this time. If you bleed through your dressing, call the Nurse Advice Line at 206-598-4549.
  - To change your dressing: First, wet it by showering or pouring water on it. This will help loosen it from your skin so it is easier to remove. You will then replace the dressing. (See our handout “Wet-to-Dry Dressing Instructions.”)

## Questions?

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., call the Surgical Specialties Nurse Advice Line at 206-598-4549.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206-598-6190 and ask for the resident on call for Surgery to be paged.

Or, ask for your surgeon to be paged:

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_

### *Showering*

#### **If your incision was stitched closed:**

- Keep the site dry and clean for 4 days after surgery.
- After 4 days, you may shower and allow the water to rinse over the area. After your shower, gently pat the skin dry.

#### **If you have an open incision:**

You will be able to shower the day after your operation. At this time:

- Allow the water to rinse through your wound. This will keep it clean and help it heal.
- After your shower, gently pat dry the area around your wound and place dry gauze in your wound. The dampness in your wound from showering will moisten the gauze.

### **Call the Nurse Advice Line or Your Doctor If You Have:**

- Bleeding or drainage that soaks your dressing
- A fever higher than 100.5°F (38°C)
- Shaking and chills
- Any sign of infection in your incision:
  - Redness
  - Increasing pain
  - Swelling
  - Foul-smelling drainage
  - A change in the type or amount of drainage
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Concerns that cannot wait until your follow-up visit

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