

Dr. Alex J. Ky
POST-SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS
I&D Anal Fistula

You had surgery for an anal fistula. An anal fistula is almost always the result of a previous abscess. Just inside the anus are small glands. When these glands get clogged, they may become infected and an abscess can develop. A fistula is a small tunnel that forms under the skin and connects a previously infected anal gland to the skin on the buttocks outside the anus. Complete recovery from this surgery takes about 2-4 weeks.

Wound Care

Please remove all packing and dressings in the shower or bath the morning following your surgery. The dressing may fall off or out prior to that time, which is fine. You may have a circular drain called a seton (pronounced "see-tawn"). The seton helps to maintain fistula drainage and should remain in place until removed by your physician..

Please perform sitz baths or tub baths twice each day as well as after each bowel movement (soak in hot water for 10-15 minutes). You may do this more frequently for cleanliness and to help relieve discomfort.

Don't worry if you have some bleeding, discharge, or itching during your recovery-this is normal. If you experience skin irritation around the anal area, use a zinc oxide based skin barrier cream. Apply a small amount to the perianal skin area three times a day after each bath or shower. Before you apply the zinc oxide barrier cream, make sure that the skin is clean and dry.

Diet and Bowel Habits

It is important to avoid becoming constipated following surgery. You may resume a normal diet and make sure to include foods high in fiber. Avoid any foods that upset your stomach or cause diarrhea. Please take 2 capsules of fiber supplements once each day. Drink an additional 8-10 glass of water during the course of each day.

If you go 48 hours without a bowel movement, take 1 tablespoon of Milk of Magnesia. If you do not have a bowel movement within 24 hours of taking Milk of Magnesia, you may take another tablespoon. If you do not have a bowel movement for a total of 4 days, please call our office.

Be sure to avoid straining with bowel movements. Straining increases pressure and irritation which can lead to swelling. Also, spend less time sitting on the toilet as it increases pressure in the rectal area.

Pain Medication

You will be given a prescription for a narcotic pain medicine (usually Percocet or Vicodin). You may use this if necessary; however, narcotics are constipating and may make your bowel movements more painful. Options for non-constipating pain medications include products that include Ibuprofen or Extra-Strength Tylenol.

Activity

Rest today, and avoid strenuous activity for 1-2 days after your procedure. Do not do any heavy lifting or vigorous exercise for 5 days.

Urination

If you cannot urinate, sit in a warm bath then try again.

When to Call the Doctor

If you experience any of the following symptoms, please call our office at 212-241-3547:

- Fever above 101.5°F
- Inability to urinate even after hot baths
- No bowel movement for more than 4 days
- An excessive amount of bleeding or drainage

Follow-up

Call our office to schedule a post-operative appointment for about 3 weeks after surgery. Please inform the receptionist of the surgery and date to ensure prompt scheduling.