



# Pilonidal sinus or abscess operation: aftercare advice

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## Information for patients from Day Surgery

You have had surgery to remove a pilonidal sinus or abscess. This leaflet explains how you should care for your wound when you return home.

### When you get home and for the first few days after your surgery

- Arrange for someone to collect you from hospital and look after you for the first 24 hours.
- You must rest for 24 to 48 hours after your operation.
- If you have had a **general anaesthetic**, for 24 hours after your operation do not:
  - drink alcohol
  - smoke, or
  - take sleeping tablets.
- If you have had a **general anaesthetic**, for 24 to 48 hours after your operation do not:
  - drive
  - cook, or
  - operate any machinery.

### How do I care for my wound?

- Before you leave hospital, we will tell you whether you have had:
  - dissolvable stitches (these will dissolve on their own over time), or
  - whether you need to make an appointment to have your stitches removed by your GP practice nurse.

- If your surgeon has left your wound open (you have had no stitches), your GP practice nurse will need to change your dressing daily after 48 hours.
- If your surgeon has closed your wound with stitches, your dressing should be kept dry and left in place for a full week, if possible. You can remove the dressing yourself, unless you have a GP practice nurse doing your dressing changes for you.
- You can have a shower or bath again one week after your surgery.
- At least three times a day, take a short walk to avoid stiffness of your muscles and joints.

### When can I start driving again?

You should avoid driving for at least one week following your surgery. Before you can start driving again, you must be able to perform an emergency stop without pain. If in doubt, please speak to your GP.

### When can I resume my normal activities?

Do not start your normal activities again (such as exercise / sport, housework, or gardening) until your wound has healed. This can take up to one month.

### When can I return to work?

You can return to work when you feel well enough, usually a week after your surgery. Please speak to your GP about this.

### How can I avoid this happening again?

To avoid further problems with this condition, you should make sure that all the hair is removed from your back and buttocks. Regularly shave, use depilatory cream, or wax the area.

### What complications should I look out for?

- Your wound may **bleed**, you can stop this by applying pressure to your wound for 10 minutes. If the bleeding continues, please contact one of the Day Surgery Units listed below.
- If you have **excessive redness, pain, or swelling around your wound**, please contact your GP. You may have developed an infection and need antibiotics.
- The **pilonidal sinus or abscess may reappear**. This is more likely to happen if you do not continue to remove the hair from your back or buttocks. If this happens you may need further treatment.

### What if I have any questions or concerns?

If you have any queries, please contact you GP or Day Surgery on the numbers below.

- Canterbury Day Surgery Centre, **Kent and Canterbury Hospital**, Canterbury  
Telephone: 01227 783114 (7.30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 687645 (8pm to 7.30am)
- Day Surgery Unit, **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital**, Margate  
Telephone: 01843 234499 (7.30am to 8pm)  
Telephone: 07887 651162 (8pm to 7.30am)
- Channel Day Surgery, **William Harvey Hospital**, Ashford  
Telephone: 01233 616263 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

**Please let us know:**

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

**You can let us know this by:**

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments**, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)).

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient information leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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