Home Care After Your Pilonidal Cyst Removal

You have a wound near your tailbone where the pilonidal cyst has been removed. The size of the wound will depend on the size of the cyst that has been removed. It is important that you take care of this wound to promote healing. Due to the location of the wound, it is recommended that you have a caregiver pack the wound for you.

Steps for Wound Packing

- Leave the original packing from surgery in overnight. If the outer dressing becomes saturated, remove it and apply a new dry dressing. On the day after your surgery, have your caregiver remove the outer dressing and the packing from the wound.

- Take a shower and allow the soap and water to run into the wound. This will rinse out the drainage in the wound and help wound healing. If you do not have a shower, you may take a bath.

- Using a Q-tip, have your caregiver apply a thin layer of hydro-active gel to the wound.

- Loosely fill or pack the wound with the calcium alginate strips. Pack it so that all areas of the wound are covered. The calcium alginate comes in strips, so just cut off the amount needed to pack the wound. One package of calcium alginate may provide more than one packing. Store it in a clean, dry place between wound dressings.

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• **Cover the wound with an absorbent dressing** and tape in place.
• This is considered a **clean procedure**. Your caregiver can wear non-sterile medical gloves while packing your wound.

**Frequency of Wound Care**

At first, the wound should be cleaned and packed twice a day. As the calcium alginate dressing becomes saturated with drainage from the wound, it will change into a gel. The drainage should decrease after a few days, and the wound can be changed one time each day.

**Drainage**

• You may notice that the drainage from the wound is thick and has an odor. These problems can be controlled by showering. You may need to pack the wound 3 times a day if the drainage saturates the outer dressing. As the drainage slows down, you can decrease the frequency of the dressing changes.

• A small amount of blood may be seen on the packing. This may occur even if the wound bed is dry. Apply the hydro-active wound gel to keep the wound moist and continue to pack the wound with the calcium alginate.

**Discomfort**

You may have pain for 4 to 5 days after your surgery. You will be given a prescription for pain medicine before you leave the hospital. As your pain eases, you can take Tylenol or Ibuprofen for discomfort if your doctor approves.

**Healing**

• The healing time of your wound will depend on its initial size. It may take 4 to 6 weeks for the wound to heal.
Your caregiver may not notice any change for the first week after your surgery, then the wound bed should appear beefy red and should slowly decrease in size.

The wound should be packed until it has healed or your doctor tells you to stop the packing. Keep your wound clean and follow the wound care instructions to promote wound healing.

**Activities**

You may resume your normal activities as you feel well enough. You should not drive while you are taking pain medicine that may cause sleepiness.

**When to Call Your Doctor**

Please call:

- If you have a temperature of 101 degrees or higher.
- If you have any questions or concerns.
- For a return appointment 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery.

- During weekday hours of 8 AM to 4:30 PM, call (614) 293-8133.
- After hours and / or weekends, call the hospital operator at (614) 293-8000 and ask for the surgical resident on call.

- Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.