



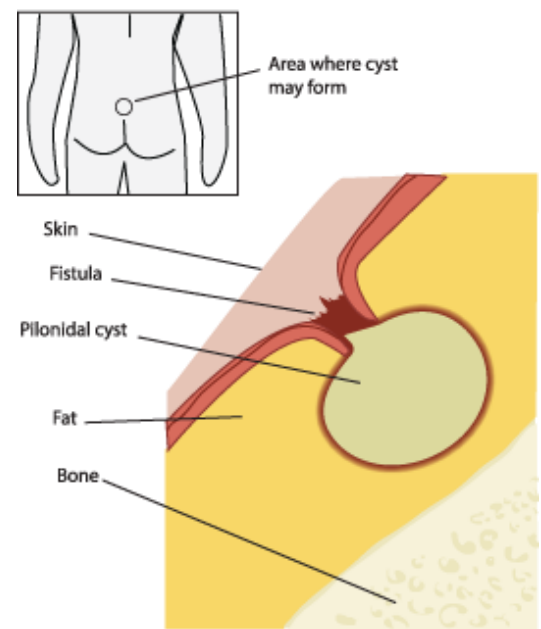
Your Guide to Wound Care

PILONIDAL CYSTS

You have a pilonidal cyst, a type of cyst (fluid-filled sac) commonly found in young people, which develops along the tailbone just above your buttocks.

It is basically an ingrown hair, which can be caused by the friction and pressure of skin rubbing against skin, tight clothing, bicycling, or long periods of sitting. It can also be that the normal stretching or motion of deep layers of skin causes the hair follicle to enlarge and rupture, which then causes a cyst to form.

Either way, the problem truly begins if the cyst becomes infected, which is very painful, and requires a surgical incision in order to allow it to drain.



MANAGING YOUR PILONIDAL CYSTS

There are things you can do every day to help your pilonidal cyst to heal properly and promptly:

1. **Wear loose fitting pants** such as sweat pants.
2. **Keep your incision covered with clean, dry dressings.** Make sure that the dressing conforms to the natural curves of your body. (Your nurse will teach you this.)
3. **Remove your dressing if it gets dirty or wet.**
4. **Sit down slowly.** Avoid pressure, friction, and trauma to your tailbone. Do not sit down for long periods of time and change positions frequently.
5. **Do NOT use skin cleansers, alcohol, peroxide, iodine, or soaps with antibacterial chemicals.** These can damage the wound tissue and slow your healing.
6. **Shave around your wound at least once a week using a pivoting head razor, to at least 2.5 cm/1 inch from the wound edges.** Have a family member help you if need be.
7. **Shower or cleanse yourself well after each bowel movement** (baby wipes are quick and effective). When showering, use a handheld sprayer to flush out any debris after shaving and prior to your dressing change. Do NOT have baths.
8. To ensure your comfort, **take your pain medication** 1 hour prior to your dressing change.
9. **Eat a balanced diet**, high in protein and fiber. Protein keeps your skin strong and helps wounds heal. Fiber will help ease any constipation associated with your pain medication and help to avoid straining.
10. **Drink plenty of fluids a day** (8-10 glasses of water)
11. **If you smoke, QUIT!** It's bad for blood flow, your skin, and your body. Your team will talk to you about options that will help you kick the habit! It's truly one of the best things you can do for your body at any age. Monitor and control your sugars. Your nurse can help you learn to do this.