



Abscess and Fistula

An abscess is a pus filled cavity near the anus or rectum.

A fistula or *fistula in ano* is a condition that can occur in up to 50 % of patients during or upon resolution of an abscess. Glands, located in the anal canal, can become blocked with fecal material or a foreign body, which may lead to an infection and abscess formation. The tract that forms underneath the skin to the abscess cavity is the fistula. Although most fistulas arise from an abscess others can occur in medical conditions such as Crohn's disease, radiation, trauma, and malignancy.

Symptoms of an abscess can include pain, swelling, and drainage from the area, fever, and malaise. A fistula can occur at the time of the initial abscess or months to years after an abscess has been treated. Symptoms may be limited to a draining sinus in the perianal region.

The treatment of an abscess includes incision and drainage. Some simple abscesses can be treated in an office setting with a local anesthetic but more complicated abscesses require surgical intervention in the operating room.

The treatment for fistula often requires a two-stage process. The first is initial examination under anesthesia. The procedure often involves draining the area to clear any evidence of infection. When no ongoing sepsis is present (which can take up to six weeks or more) patients return to the operating room for a more definitive procedure and a variety of treatment options are available.

If you think you are suffering from an abscess or fistula please call our office today for an appointment. Remember the above information does not replace instructions given to you by your healthcare provider.