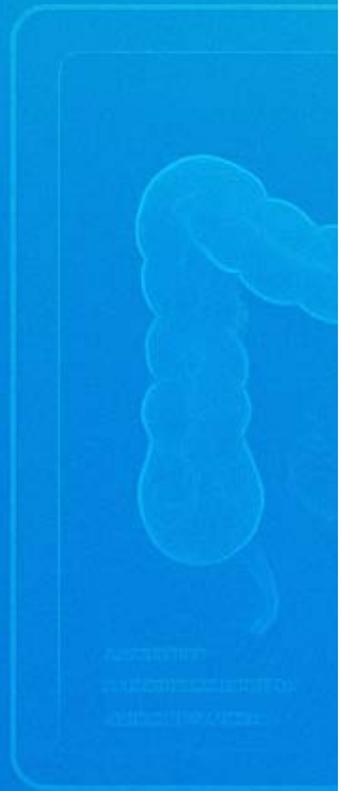
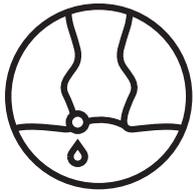




Patient information leaflet

# Anorectal Abscess & Fistula





# Anorectal Abscess & Fistula

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## ? What are Anorectal Abscess and Fistula?

An **anorectal abscess** is a painful, pus-filled lump that develops near the anus. It happens when one of the small glands around the anus becomes infected. The area can become painful, swollen, red, and warm to the touch. You might also feel unwell or develop a fever. Less often, it can also be the result of the infection of an anal fissure or sexually transmitted infections.

An abscess requires surgical drainage. When left untreated, the abscess can burst and drain on its own or cause a more severe infection.

An **anal fistula** is a small tunnel that can form between the inside of the anus and the skin around it. It often develops **after an abscess has drained or healed** but leaves a connection between the inside of the bowel and the outside skin. You might notice discharge, pain, or skin irritation near your bottom.



## Signs & Symptoms

- Severe, persistent pain around the anus, worsened by sitting or passing stools
- Swelling, redness, and warmth near the affected area
- Fever and general discomfort
- Pus or foul-smelling liquid draining from an opening near the anus
- A visible hole or small opening in the skin near the anus



## Diagnosis

A doctor will examine the area through a **clinical exam**, a **digital rectal exam** and if need be, **an anoscopy** (a small tube used to view inside the anal canal and rectum).

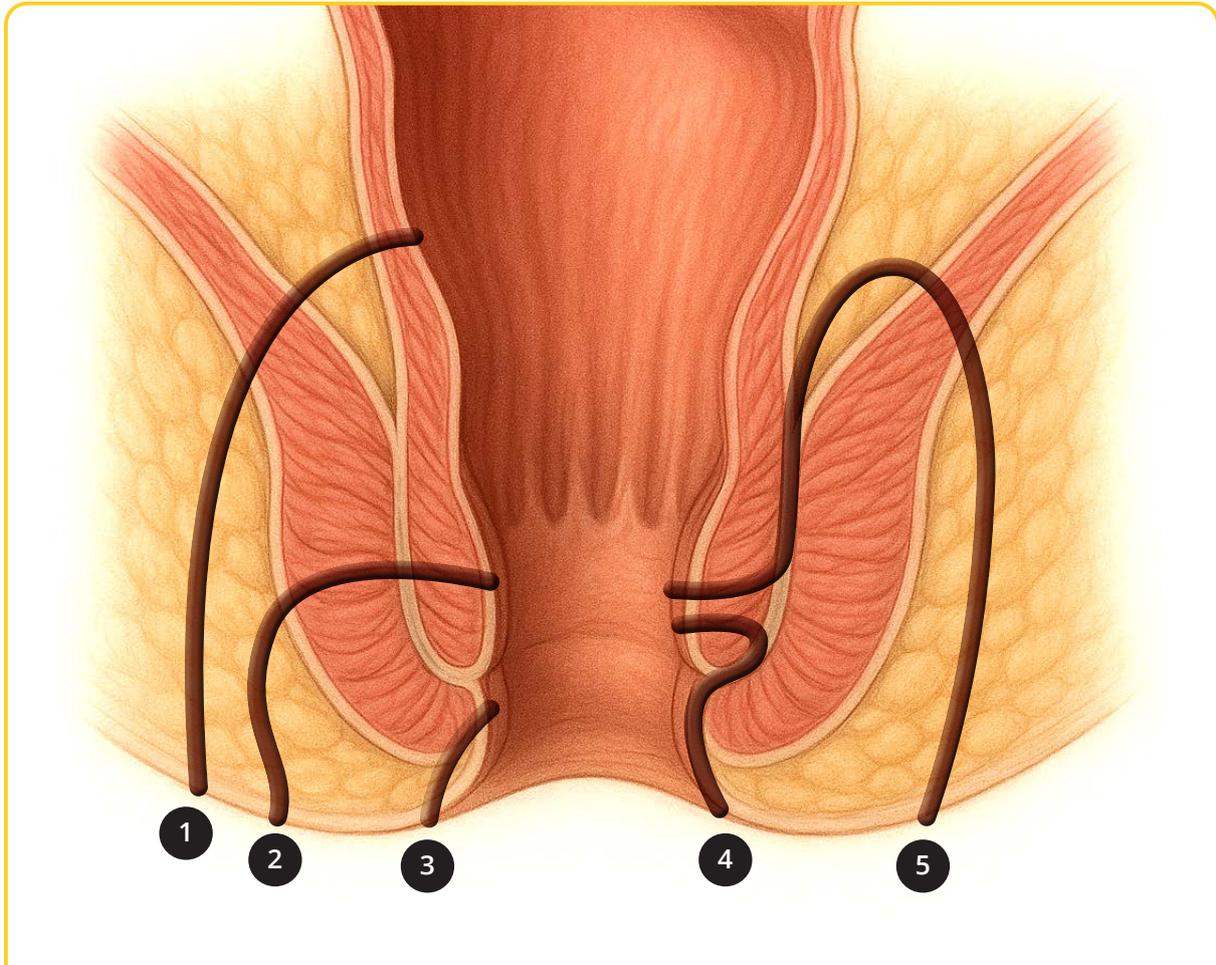
When doing the work-up for anal fistula, additional tests may be required, such as:

- MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)
- CT scan (computed tomography)
- Ultrasound
- Fistulography (X-ray with contrast dye)
- Examination under anesthesia



## Types of Anal Fistula

There are different types of anal fistulas, classified based on their location and involvement with the anal sphincter muscles.



- 1 Extrasphincteric Fistula
- 2 Transsphincteric Fistula
- 3 Superficial Fistula
- 4 Intersphincteric Fistula
- 5 Suprasphincteric Fistula



## Treatment Options

### Perianal abscess:

The standard treatment for an abscess involves making an incision to allow pus to drain.

Small abscesses may be drained under local anesthesia, while larger abscesses often require general anesthesia to properly rinse the cavity.

### Anal fistula

The type of treatment depends on the kind of fistula and how it relates to the muscles that control bowel movements (the sphincter). There are different treatment options, and sometimes more than one may be needed.

It is important to focus on your **quality of life** and **protecting bowel control (continence)**, rather than rushing into treatment that might cause damage to the sphincter muscle. The goal is to treat the fistula carefully while avoiding unwanted side effects.



For a more detailed explanation of different fistulas and treatment options, please check out the patient information on the **ESCP website**.



## When to See a Doctor

If you experience persistent anal pain, swelling, fever, or unusual discharge, consult a colorectal surgeon. Early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent complications and improve recovery.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to ask your doctor or colorectal surgeon for personalized advice. Or check out the ESCP website patient leaflets for more detailed information.

**Disclaimer:**

The information provided here is general and with hopes to correctly inform the patient to the extent possible. However, this document cannot discuss all aspects of a specific surgical procedure or of the individual patient. The decision on which procedure will give you the best result is made by your doctor or colorectal surgeon during consultation and based on shared and informed decision-making with the patient.



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