



Helping You Heal:  
Your Guide to Wound Care

# Pilonidal Cysts



Ontario  
Health atHome

## The Program

This booklet will help you:

- Manage your wound at home,
- Improve and maintain your health and quality of life,
- Prevent new wounds.

You can use this booklet and the accompanying passport to:

- Keep track of information about your care,
- Guide your day-to-day wound care,
- Know when you need to call your care team,
- Ensure that your wound is being managed in the best way possible.

**Your team looks forward to working with YOU to Heal/Take Control of Your Wound.**



Wound Self Management Program

### YOUR PASSPORT TO HEALTH

Your Health Passport is for you and your family and/or caregiver. It contains information that is important to you, your condition and treatments as you begin managing your wound. Inside you will find forms and tables that will become a daily log as you move through caring for your wound. Make sure you bring this passport with you to all your medical appointments/ procedures.



You have developed some personal goals, and your passport is your tool to keeping track of them, and your care, as you begin managing your wound at home.

To heal your wound you will need to take care of yourself and pay attention to your body, but it does not mean you need to stop doing the things you love to do. This booklet is here to help you!

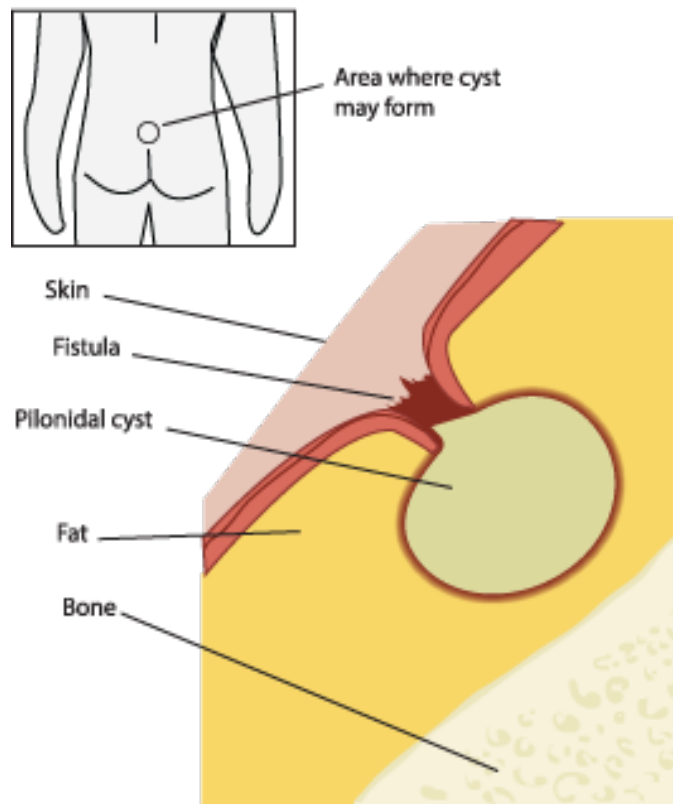
Keep this booklet and your passport nearby, in a convenient spot, so you can refer to them and make notes about your healing journey. It helps to know a bit more about your particular wound.

## Arterial Leg Ulcers

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.

## Caring For Your Wound

Here are the steps you'll need to take to properly care for your wound.

### Prepare

- Get your supplies together and clean a work surface with plenty of room

### Wash Hands

- Remove all jewelry and point hands down, under warm water
- Add soap and wash for 15 to 30 seconds, cleaning under your nails
- Rinse and dry well with a clean towel

### Removing Dressing

- Carefully loosen the dressing, and pull off gently
- If the dressing sticks, wet the area
- Put old dressing in a plastic bag, and set aside
- Wash your hands AGAIN

### Inspect

- Inspect wound for any drainage, redness, pain or swelling

### Clean Wound

- Fill the syringe with recommended fluid
- Hold 1 to 6 inches away from the wound and spray gently
- Use soft, dry cloth or piece of gauze to pat the wound dry

### Apply Dressing

- Place and secure the clean dressing onto your wound

### Finish

- Throw used supplies into waterproof, tightly closed, double plastic bag
- Wash your hands AGAIN
- Wash any soiled laundry separately

**Remember, use a dressing only ONCE and never reuse.**

## Signs of Trouble

Your wound will change throughout the healing process. Changing your dressing gives you a chance to take a closer look at your wound.

Call your nurse if you see the following changes:

- More redness, pain, swelling, or bleeding.
- The wound is larger or deeper.
- The wound looks dried out or dark.
- The drainage coming from the wound is increasing.
- The drainage coming from the wound becomes thick, tan, green or yellow, or smells bad (pus).
- Your temperature is above 100 °F (37.8 °C) for more than 2 hours.

## My Dressing Change

Keep the following list handy and use it to help you remember the types of dressings you will use for your wound and when to change your dressings.

**I remove my dressing:**

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**I clean my wound:**

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**The 1st dressing I apply:**

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**The 2nd dressing I apply:**

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**The 3rd dressing I apply:**

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**I change my dressings:**

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**I will call my nurse:**

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**If my dressing leaks:**

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## Managing Your Wound

Here are a few scenarios that will help you to judge how your healing is progressing:

### Your wound is healthy.

Your wound looks very similar to the last dressing change. There is no redness, inflammation, pain, bleeding and the discharge looks the same. Your wound may look smaller and the discharge may be less.

### Your wound may be in trouble, call your nurse.

Your wound looks larger or deeper. There is some redness and it looks swollen. There is no bleeding but the discharge is different, or there is more than usual.

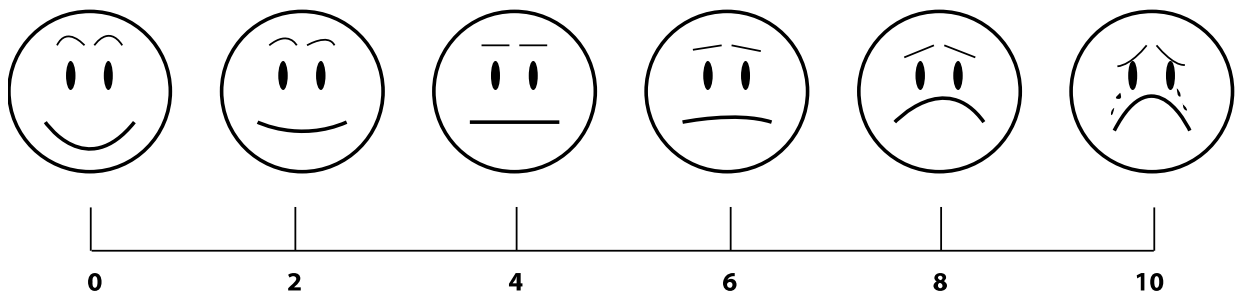
### Call your nurse or follow up with your primary care provider. If there is an emergency, call 911.

Your wound looks much larger or deeper. There is redness, swelling and bleeding that isn't stopping. The discharge is very different or there is much more of it. You have pain and a fever.

## Daily Activities

Please note the following daily activities:

- Check your dressing daily. Ensure your dressing is dry and stable. Check to see if a dressing change is required.
- Inspect your skin and body.
- Assess your wound for any changes daily or with each dressing change.
- Eat three meals a day based on Canada's Food Guide.
- Assess how you generally feel today.
- Assess your pain level. The scale below may help you to assess your pain level. You may review this with your nurse at appointments.
- Follow your exercise plan.



## Red Flags

**If you experience any of these, call 911 or go to the emergency room immediately!**

- Your temperature is above 100 °F (37.8 °C) for more than 4 hours.
- You have difficulty breathing.
- You feel confused.
- You have fever, chills, or light-headedness.
- Your wound is bleeding and does NOT stop.

## Contact Information

Use this worksheet to record important numbers and information while you manage your wound at home.

**My Nurse's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Care Coordinator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My Physician:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone No.:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Number:** \_\_\_\_\_





## Contact Us

If you have any questions regarding this service, please contact:  
310-2222 • [ontariohealthathome.ca](https://ontariohealthathome.ca)

Ontario Health atHome has many community offices in the North East to serve you, including:

### Kirkland Lake

53 Government Road West  
Kirkland Lake ON P2N 2E5  
Telephone: 705-567-2222  
Toll free: 1-888-602-2222

### North Bay

1164 Devonshire Ave.  
North Bay ON P1B 6X7  
Telephone: 705-476-2222  
Toll free: 1-888-533-2222

### Parry Sound

6 Albert St.  
Parry Sound ON P2A 3A4  
Toll free: 1-800-440-6762

### Sault Ste. Marie

390 Bay Street, Suite 103  
Sault Ste. Marie ON P6A 1X2  
Telephone: 705-949-1650  
Toll free: 1-800-668-7705

### Sudbury

40 Elm St, Suite 41-C  
Sudbury ON P3C 1S8  
Telephone: 705-522-3461  
Toll free: 1-800-461-2919  
TTY: 711  
(ask operator for 1-888-533-2222)

### Timmins

330 Second Avenue, Suite 101  
Timmins ON P4N 8A4  
Telephone: 705-267-7766  
Toll free: 1-888-668-2222

# Exceptional care – wherever you call home.

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Ontario Health atHome coordinates in-home and community-based care for thousands of patients across the province every day.

For information and referrals related to home and community care or to learn more about long-term care home placement services, please call 310-2222. No area code is required.

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[www.ontariohealthathome.ca](http://www.ontariohealthathome.ca)



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