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Pilonidal Cyst

A pilonidal cyst is a cavity under the skin over the tail bone (lower back) that collects ingrown hairs and debris. This is an acquired condition, initially affecting teenagers or young adults. After the hairs are trapped under the skin they can form an abscess that can be very large and painful.

The most frequent symptoms are pain, pressure and drainage. Swelling and fever can be present if left untreated. Multiple episodes are also very common.

The initial treatment consists of the drainage and debridement of the abscess cavity to relieve the pressure and avoid progression. The earlier the therapy, the more superficial the abscess. Patients with systemic disease like diabetes, weak immune system or who have artificial valves or other prostheses may require antibiotics in conjunction with the drainage.

After the initial therapy, in many cases a pilonidal fistula can form. This occurs where one or more tracts under the skin of the tail bone that collect hairs continue to drain purulent secretions. Surgery may be necessary to correct this condition. In most cases as an outpatient and under anesthesia, the cavity is opened, cleaned and allow to heal from inside out.

Wound hygiene after surgery is the single most important part of the therapy and prevention. Careful cleansing and dressing of the wound will allow the cavity to heal from the inside out and prevent recurrence.

Most of pilonidal abscesses are simple, but they can also be very challenging problems. Other conditions may present or be associated with an abscess or fistula. Consult your doctor for a check up to confirm the diagnosis.

Even though these conditions are usually minor, they are best treated by a Board Certified Colon and Rectal Surgeon, an expert in this field.

Please go to our website www.drisaac.net for more information. Look for patient education and instructions.