

Information about having a
**Percutaneous Abscess
Drainage**

What is a Percutaneous Abscess Drainage?

This is the draining of an abscess through the skin by inserting a fine plastic tube, called a drainage catheter. We will need to make a tiny cut to do this.

Who will do it?

A specially trained doctor called a Radiologist.

Where will it be done?

Usually in a screening room in the x-ray department. It may also be done in an operating theatre.

When can I discuss the procedure?

You can discuss this with your referring doctor in the ward, and also the Radiologist before the procedure.

Consent

We will ask you to sign a consent form before the procedure. Please make sure that you ask any questions you may have. When signing the form you should know what we plan to do, alternative treatments, and any risks or complication of the procedure.

What preparation is required before the procedure?

This will vary depending on where the abscess is. You cannot eat for 6 hours before the procedure but you may drink small amounts of clear fluids up to 2 hours before the procedure. The nursing staff will tell you about this. We will more than likely give you antibiotics.

You will need to undress and wear a hospital gown.

What happens during the procedure?

This is a sterile procedure however the technique used may vary. We may give you sedatives or painkillers via a needle in your arm. We will monitor your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, oxygen intake). You may need oxygen.

The radiologist will use the x-ray or ultrasound equipment to guide the fine plastic tube (catheter). We will numb your skin with a local anaesthetic. You may experience some slight discomfort for a short period of time but painkillers will help this.

Sometimes we do not use a catheter and we remove the fluid using a needle.

How long will it take?

This can vary for a number of reasons however you can expect to be in the x-ray department for about one hour.

What happens afterwards?

You will return to your ward and remain on bed rest for a few hours. The nursing staff will monitor you and carry out routine observations (blood pressure, pulse etc) along with observation of the puncture site and fluid draining from the drain.

The drainage catheter stays in place and will be attached to a collection bag. You should be able to carry on as normal however, it is important to be aware that the drainage system is still attached so avoid sudden movements.

The doctor looking after you will decide how long the catheter has to remain in place. Removing the catheter is usually pain free.

Are there any risks?

Percutaneous abscess drainage is a safe procedure but as with any medical treatment some risks and complication can arise.

Occasionally the radiologist may be unable to place the drainage tube satisfactorily in the abscess therefore it may be necessary for an operation. Your consultant will arrange this.

Although rare, you may get a shivering attack (a rigor) during the procedure but this is generally treated successfully with antibiotics.

If you have any questions please telephone the number on your appointment card or letter.