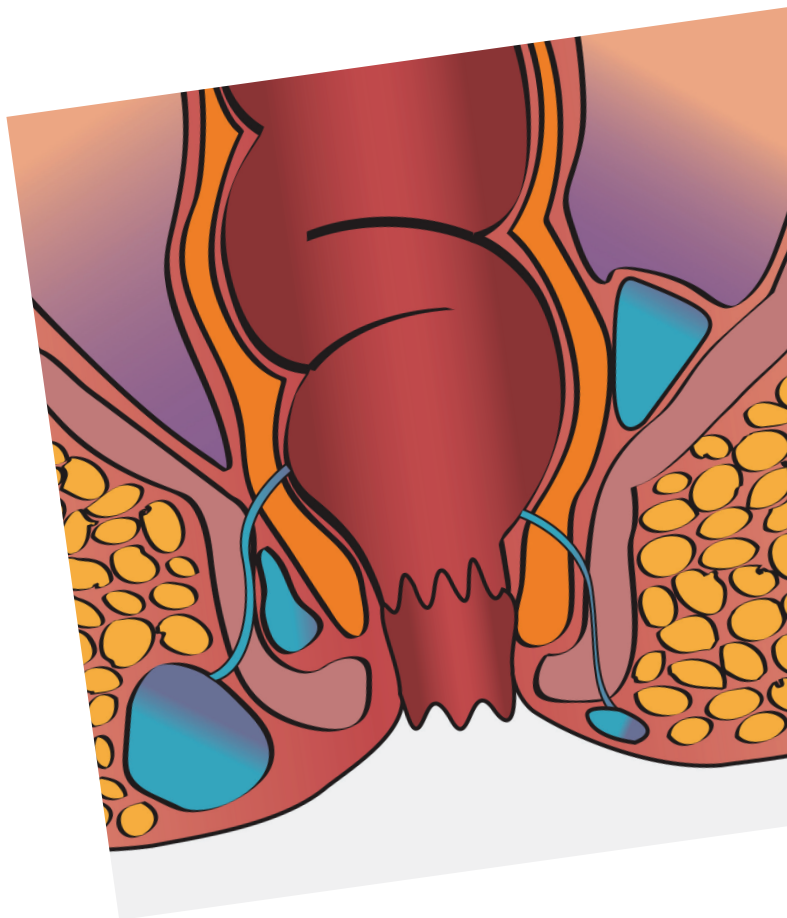


# Anal Fistulas & Abscesses



The Department of Surgery sees patients for a wide range of surgical services. These include Colorectal, Endocrine, Breast, Upper GI, Bariatrics, Hepatobiliary, Plastics, Neurosurgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery. Our highly qualified consultants use minimally-invasive surgery and surgical endoscopy for diagnostic and therapeutic interventions in the treatment of these conditions. We provide inpatient and outpatient care with a 24-hour acute surgical service. Day surgery (endoscopy) and minor surgery (lumps and bumps) are also offered at Jurong Medical Centre.

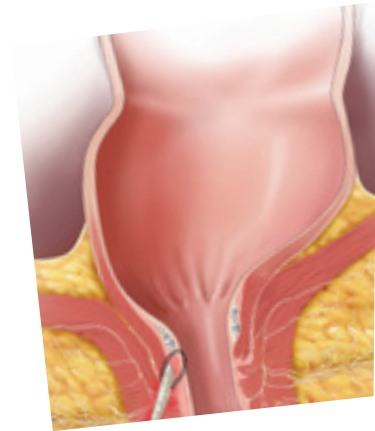
## What is an anal abscess?

An anorectal abscess is a collection of pus arising from the anus or the lower rectum region. The most common cause is an infection of the anus glands. After an abscess is drained (either by itself or removed surgically), a tunnel (fistula) continue to persist, and connect the infected anal gland to the external skin. If the opening on the skin heals when a fistula is present, an abscess may redevelop.

## What is an anal fistula?

An anal fistula is the result of a previous or current anal abscess (tear in the skin lining the opening of the anus). Occurring in up to 50% of patients with abscesses, the fistula is a tunnel that forms under the skin and connects the infected glands to the abscess. A fistula can be present with or without an abscess and may connect to the skin of the buttocks near the anal opening.

Other less common causes include past exposure to radiation, tuberculosis, trauma and malignancy.



## What are the signs or symptoms of an abscess or fistula?

Pain, redness or swelling in the anal area, fever or chills.

The symptoms are similar in a fistula. Patients with anal fistulas may also experience skin irritation near the anus or drainage from an external opening.

## Are there specific tests to diagnose an abscess or fistula?

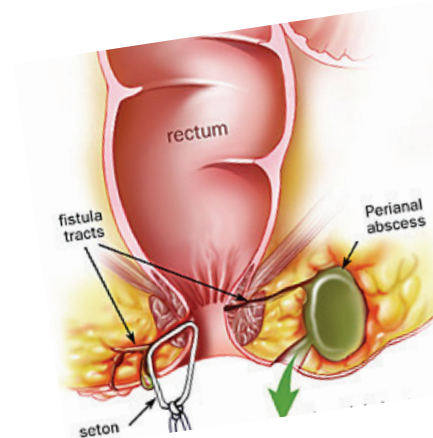
No. Most anal abscesses or anal fistulas are diagnosed and managed by clinical findings. At times an endoanal ultrasound or MRI scans assist with the diagnosis of deeper abscesses to offer clearer knowledge of the fistula tunnel.

## How is an anal abscess treated?

An abscess is treated surgically most of the time. An incision is made near the anus to drain the infection and done either with local anaesthetic or under deeper anaesthesia. Hospitalisation may be required for patients with diabetes or decreased immunity problems (prone to significant infections).

## Are antibiotics required?

Antibiotics on its own cannot drain the infection. For uncomplicated abscesses, antibiotics cannot improve healing or reduce a recurrence. Patients with weaker immunity, some cardiac conditions or extensive cellulitis may be prescribed antibiotics.



## How is anal fistula treated?

Surgery is usually recommended to treat anal fistula. In some complicated cases, multiple operations are required. Your surgeon will discuss and advise you accordingly. If the fistula is straightforward, a fistulotomy will be used to connect the internal opening in the anal canal to the external opening to create a groove to help it heal inside out. This procedure involves dividing a small portion of the sphincter muscle.

Other procedures involve surgically altering the surrounding tissue to close the fistula tract, such as ligation of the inter-sphincteric fistula tract (L.I.F.T procedure) or an advancement flap.

## What is recovery like?

It is normal to experience moderate discomfort in the first week. Pain can be controlled with medication, eating more fibre and taking laxatives. You may need to wear a gauze pad to prevent the post-operative drainage from soiling your clothes. Discuss with your surgeon how long you need to be away from work to give yourself enough time to rest and recover.

## Can an abscess or fistula return?

Although most anorectal abscesses and fistulas are treated successfully, there is some possibility of recurrence. Please seek medical help immediately if it returns.

## For more information

### Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital

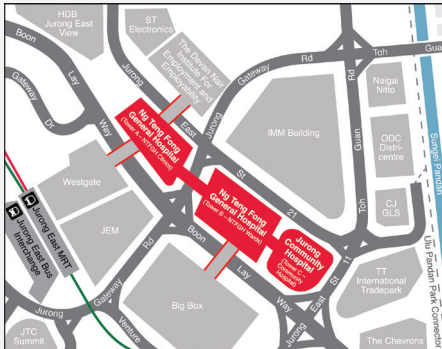
1 Jurong East St 21,  
Singapore 609606  
General enquiries: 6716 2000 Fax: 6716 5500  
www.juronghealth.com.sg

#### Clinical and appointment line hours (closed on Sundays and public holidays)

For appointments, please call 6716 2222  
Monday - Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm,  
Saturday 8.00am - 12.30pm

For dental appointments, please call 6716 2233  
Monday - Thursday 8.00am - 5.30pm,  
Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm

### Getting there



#### By train

Jurong East MRT Station

#### By bus

##### From Jurong East Bus Interchange

SBS 51, 52, 66, 78, 79, 97, 97e, 98,  
98M, 105, 143, 143M, 160, 183, 197,  
333, 334, 335, 506

##### Along Boon Lay Way

SBS 99, Private bus service 625

### Jurong Medical Centre

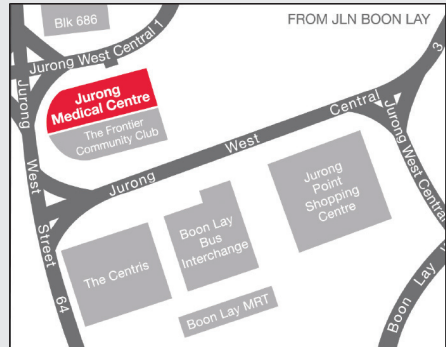
60 Jurong West Central 3,  
Singapore 648346  
General enquiries: 6716 2000 Fax: 6551 7999  
www.jmc.com.sg

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### Getting there



#### By train

Boon Lay MRT Station

#### By bus

SBS 30, 79, 154, 157, 174, 179, 181,  
182, 192, 193, 194, 198, 199, 240, 241,  
242, 243 W/G, 246, 249, 251, 252, 254,  
255, 257, 405  
SMRT 172, 178, 180, 187

#### Disclaimer:

The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition.