Fistula Repairs of the Vagina

Fistulas of the vagina are abnormal connections between the vagina and another organ:
- Rectum (recto)
- Ileal pouch (pouch)
- Colon (colo)
- Small bowel (entero)
- Anal canal (ano)

Causes of fistulas:
- Injury during childbirth
- Bowel disease
- X-ray treatments
- Cancer
- Infection
- Prior colorectal surgery

You may have gas or stool coming through the vagina. Based on location, the repair may be done through the abdomen, vagina, or rectum. In a rectal approach repair, rectal tissue and/or muscle are moved to cover the fistula opening. If you have an anal-muscle defect, this may also be repaired. Repair of a complex fistula may need a short-term ostomy to help it heal. We will explain to you how your fistula will be closed.

Risks of a repair may include:
- Infection
- Bleeding (rare)
- Breakdown of the stitches and nearby tissue

If there is a problem with the anal muscles or nerves, you may need these tests:
- Anal ultrasound allows the doctor to see the muscles and look for problems.
- Manometry measures resting and the amount of squeeze in the anal canal.
- Nerve tests check how the nerve and muscles work together.

- Barium enema helps find the fistula opening
- Exam with a scope of the large bowel and anal canal helps to find the fistula.
- If you need a bowel prep before a test, we will review this with you.

Getting Ready for Surgery
You will have to do a bowel prep before your surgery. You will get instructions to follow for the bowel prep.

After hours, weekends and holidays ask for the doctor on call for Dr. _______________. Tell them your problem.

After Surgery
You may have bloody drainage from the vagina. Wear a pad to manage and check the output. Foul smelling drainage or soaking a pad with blood is not normal. If you have a short-term ostomy to help you heal, we will teach you how to take care of it.

Pain
It is normal to have pain or pressure in the area of repair. You will have pain pills to take for pain.

Activity
- Avoid all tobacco, including second hand smoke.
- It is okay to shower.
- Take your temperature at the same time each day until your follow-up visit.
- Walk every day. Nothing more strenuous than walking until okayed by your doctor.
- You doctor will tell you when it is safe to have sex.
• Do not lift more than 10 pounds until okayed by your doctor.
• Do not drive while taking narcotic pain pills.

Diet
You will be on a full liquid diet the first few days. Then you can increase the foods in your diet as you are able. Plan to eat a low fiber diet for 2 weeks after you go home. To avoid constipation you may take a stool softener. Expect to have loose stools while on the low fiber diet.

When to Call the Doctor
• Excess swelling
• Excess bleeding
• Foul smelling drainage
• Pain not controlled with pain pills
• Problems with bowel movements
• Problems passing urine
• Temperature greater than 100.4°F by mouth for two readings taken 4 hours apart
• Any other symptoms that concern you

Phone Numbers
Digestive Health Center: (608) 890-5000.

After hours, weekends or holidays ask for the doctor on call for_________________. Leave your name and phone number with area code. We will call you back.

Toll Free: (855) 342-9900.