Collagen Plug for the Treatment of Anal Fistula

The **Collagen Plug** is a treatment for closing an anal fistula.

- The plug is made from the connective tissue of pigs—it is sterilized and there are no living cells in the plug.
- The collagen plug is placed inside the fistula tract and sewn into place.
- The body forms scar tissue inside and around the plug. The plug acts like a mesh-frame, and the body fills in the holes with new blood vessels and tissue.
- Eventually the collagen plug is replaced by your own tissue.

This surgery can be performed as an outpatient procedure. It does not involve extensive cutting of the rectal wall or the sphincter muscle.

**Preparation & Surgery**

- The day before surgery you will do a bowel cleanout to delay bowel movements for a few days after the procedure.
  - It will include clear liquids for the full day before the surgery and a laxative.
  - You will receive written instructions.
- Antibiotics are given at the time of surgery to help prevent infection.
- The surgery takes about 30 minutes.
- You will go home after the procedure.
Care after placement of the Collagen Plug

Diet
A very light diet for the first 48 hours after the procedure helps postpone a bowel movement.

• Take clear liquids, thin soups, puddings, and Jell-O.

After two days:
• Eat a regular high fiber diet.
• Drink at least 6 glasses of water each day.
• Take a fiber supplement to keep stools soft and formed and easy to pass.

Care of the surgery site
• Shower the area 2–3 times each day for comfort and cleaning.
• **DO NOT SIT IN A BATHTUB** for 2 weeks after this procedure.
  ◦ Climbing in and out of the tub and soaking may cause the plug to fall out.
• Your provider may prescribe the use of a topical antibiotic
  ◦ Apply it to the external opening of the fistula three times each day.
• Drainage can continue for 6 weeks after the procedure.

Activity
The less activity you do the better chance that the plug will stay in place.

For a minimum of 2 weeks, avoid:
• heavy lifting
• straining
• jogging
• working-out
• swimming
• squat thrusts
• bench lifts and similar activities
**Pain**

Most patients have discomfort and sometimes pain at the site of the fistula after placement of the plug.

- Take the prescribed pain medication as needed.
  - Expect to use less of the prescription medication over two weeks.
- You can use an over the counter medication such as Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin or Aleve as you lower the use of prescription pain medications.
- If your pain gets worse call the office.

**Problems?**

For increased pain, fever, difficulty urinating please call the Colorectal Nurse Practitioner at 415-885-3613. If after-hours, call answering service at 415-885-3606.

**Follow up**

Call the Center for Colorectal Surgery for an appointment for 3 to 4 weeks after the procedure.

415-885-3606

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