

Endoscopic ablation for an anal fistula

Information for the public

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This procedure works well for an anal fistula and there are no serious concerns about its safety.

An anal fistula is a narrow tunnel that forms between the end of the bowel and the skin near the anus. It may cause pain or discomfort, and leak blood or pus. In this procedure, an endoscope (a thin flexible tube with a camera on the end) is put into the fistula. An electrode is passed through the endoscope to deliver heat, which seals the inside of the fistula. Stitches are used to close the end of the fistula that is nearest to the bowel. The aim is to encourage healing.

The [NHS website](#) may be a good place to find out more. NICE's information on [interventional procedures guidance](#) has more about what a procedure is and how we assess them.

Is this procedure right for me?

If you've been offered this procedure, your healthcare professionals should discuss with you what is involved and tell you about the risks and benefits. They should talk with you about your options, and listen carefully to your views and concerns. Your family can be involved too, if you wish. All of this should happen before you agree (consent) to have the procedure. You should also be told how to find more information about the procedure. Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Some questions to think about

- What does the procedure involve?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- What happens if the procedure doesn't work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I don't want the procedure? Are there other treatments available?

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