# Title

**Guideline: The Management of People with Pilonidal Sinus Wounds**

## Background
- See “Guideline: The Assessment of People with Pilonidal Sinus Wounds”

## Indications

This guideline is intended to be used by front line registered health care providers, to guide their management of individuals admitted or presenting with a pilonidal sinus wound.

## Guideline

**NOTE:** The management of a person with a pilonidal sinus wound follows “The SWRWCP’s Pilonidal Sinus Assessment and Management Algorithm”.

1. Position the person in a prone jackknife position. One or two pillows may need to be placed under the person’s anterior pelvis when they are lying prone to achieve the desire effect. The person must then separate their buttocks using both hands.

### Healeable Wounds

1. Upon completion of a thorough, holistic patient and wound assessment as per the SWRWCP’s “Guideline: The Assessment of People with Pilonidal Sinus Wounds” and upon determination that the wound in question is ‘healable’, cleanse the wound as per the “SWRWCP’s Dressing Selection and Cleansing Enabler – HEALABLE”.

   Ensure that you have irrigated to the base of any sinuses present using an angio-cath, wound irrigating tip, small Foley catheter, or pediatric NG tube.

2. As you have previously determined that the wound is healable:
   b. Cleanse the wound again post debridement using the “SWRWCP’s Dressing Selection and Cleansing Enabler – HEALABLE”. Gently pat the wound dry with gauze as needed. **NOTE:** you may consider gently packing a piece of gauze strip packing into sinus areas to remove any excess irrigant, and then removing that wet packing
   c. **Cleanse the perineal skin extending 5cm around the wound with 0.5% chlorhexidine, leaving the solution in place for 1 minute.** **NOTE:** leave the solution in direct...
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**Maintenance/Non-Healable Wounds**

1. Upon completion of a thorough, holistic person and wound assessment as per the SWRWCP’s “Guideline: The Assessment of People with Pilonidal Sinus Wounds”, and upon determination that the wound in question is ‘maintenance’ or ‘non-healable’, cleanse the wound as per the “SWRWCP’s Dressing Selection and Cleansing Enabler – MAINTENANCE/NON-HEALABLE”. Ensure that you have

   - **Contact with the periwound for a minimum of 5 minutes in wounds contaminated or infected with Pseudomonas.**
   - **NOTE:** if the person is sensitive to chlorhexidine, consider using povidone 10% in its place

   d. Choose an appropriate conventional moist wound dressing or combination of dressings as per the “Guideline: The Assessment and Management of Moisture in Acute and Chronic Wounds”, using the “SWRWCP’s Dressing Selection and Cleansing Enabler – HEALABLE”, unless otherwise directed by a physician or nurse practitioner. This may involve the use of topical antimicrobials if identified as a need (see “Guideline: The Assessment and Management of Bacterial Burden in Acute and Chronic Wounds”). Choose a dressing that will:

   i. Promote an ideal moist wound healing environment
   ii. Prevent wound bed cooling and disruption
   iii. Avoid wound contamination by fecal matter and/or hair
   iv. Matches the contours of the natal cleft, sealed at all edges
   v. Reduce interface friction and shear
   vi. Prevent strike through of exudates that potentiates bacterial contamination, while wicking moisture away from the wound base
   vii. Be cost effective, i.e. do NOT use conventional dressing products for daily dressing changes!
   viii. Be comfortable to wear, cushioning the wound and not causing increased pain during wear time or on removal

e. Choose an appropriate dressing change frequency based on:

   i. Your wound assessment, including the person’s risk for infection
   ii. Dressing products used and their ability to manage the drainage anticipated
   iii. The person’s comfort and acceptability
irrigated to the base of any sinuses present using an angio-cath, wound irrigating tip, small Foley catheter, or pediatric NG tube

2. If you have determined that the wound is maintenance/non-healable:
   a. **DO NOT DEBRIDE**
   
   b. Cleanse the perineal skin extending 5cm around the wound with 0.5% chlorhexidine, leaving the solution in place for 1 minute. **NOTE: leave the solution in direct contact with the periwound for a minimum of 5 minutes in wounds contaminated or infected with Pseudomonas.**

   **NOTE: if the person is sensitive to chlorhexidine, consider using povidone 10% in its place**

   c. Choose an appropriate dry gauze based dressing or combination of dressings, as per the “Guideline: Assessment and Management of Moisture in Acute and Chronic Wounds”, using the “SWRWCP’s Dressing Selection and Cleansing Enabler – MAINTENANCE/NON-HEALABLE”, unless otherwise directed by a physician or nurse practitioner. This may involve the use of topical antimicrobials if identified as a need (see “Guideline: The Assessment and Management of Bacterial Burden in Acute and Chronic Wounds”). Choose a dressing that will:\n
   i. Promote a dry wound environment
   ii. Minimize bacterial contamination and contamination by fecal matter and/or hair
   iii. Matches the contours of the natal cleft, sealed at all edges
   iv. Prevent strike through of exudates that potentiates bacterial contamination, while wicking moisture away from the wound base
   v. Be cost effective, i.e. do NOT use conventional dressing products for daily dressing changes!
   vi. Be comfortable to wear, cushioning the wound and not causing increased pain during wear time or on removal

   d. Choose an appropriate dressing change frequency based on:

   i. Your wound assessment - goal is to keep the wound clean, dry and free of infection
   ii. Dressing products used and their ability to manage the drainage anticipated
   iii. The person’s comfort and acceptability

### Management Guidelines for ALL Pilonidal Sinus Wounds, Regardless of Healability

1. **Treat the cause:**
a. Modify any identified intrinsic, extrinsic, and iatrogenic factors affecting wound healing to promote the healing existing pilonidal sinus wounds (or stabilization if healing is not the goal), and to prevent complications

b. Remind the person to limit excessive walking, prolonged periods of sitting and participation in sports until the wound has closed, as these contribute to shearing, friction and pressure at the natal cleft area, which can impair wound healing. “Increased perspiration caused by the activity can also contribute to external contamination” of the pilonidal sinus wound.

2. Person centered concerns:

a. Manage pain using the SWRWCP’s “WHO Pain Ladder with Pain Management Guidelines”. Consider:
   i. Coordinated pre-dressing change analgesia
   ii. Regular dosing of pain medications
   iii. Use of appropriate medications to manage neuropathic pain
   iv. Use of topical analgesics (i.e. morphine) or anesthetic (i.e. EMLA or lidocaine) if pain during dressing changes

b. Consider non-pharmacological methods of pain management, i.e. appropriate dressing choice, distraction, guided imagery, pressure redistribution, music, time-outs during dressing changes, less frequent dressing changes, etc.

c. Ensure the plan of care is created with input of the person with the wound and/or their caregiver, including their concerns, motivations, abilities and preferences for treatment

3. Debridement:

a. Determine if debridement is appropriate for the person and the wound

b. If appropriate, select an appropriate method of debridement considering the:
   i. Goals of treatment, i.e. healability
   ii. Person’s overall health condition
   iii. Type, quantity and location of necrotic tissue
   iv. Wound depth and amount of drainage
   v. Availability of resources

c. Consider referrals to a Wound Care Specialist (WCS) or Enterostomal Therapy (ET) Nurse for conservative sharp debridement of non-viable tissue using sterile instruments

d. Consider requesting a referral to a surgeon for surgical sharp debridement, if indicated
e. Ensure adequate pain management with wound debridement
f. If undermining is discovered under tissue that bridges superficially (appears as thin, bluish colored new epithelial tissue 1-2mm in depth) with a sinus tract extending underneath this area, spread the buttocks apart with the hands, providing enough force to split the superficial bridge spontaneously. If this is not possible to do, arrange for a physician to open the undermining distally to proximally using a scalpel and local anesthetic. Use silver nitrate sticks and calcium alginate dressing if bleeding occurs.
g. Red friable granulation tissue or pocketing of granulation tissue should be cauterized with silver nitrate to deter its growth and to remove surface bacteria. This MUST be done as often as hypergranulation is visualized.

4. Infection control:
a. Teach that new onset or worsening pain is a sign of infection and requires immediate medical attention.
b. Treat bacterial burden as per the “Guideline: The Assessment and Management of Bacterial Burden in Acute and Chronic Wounds”, using the “Bacterial Burden in Chronic Wounds” tool. **NOTE: Topical antimicrobials can be used to reduce bacterial burden in the presence of superficial wound infection, but never take the place of systemic antibiotics when those are needed for deeper infections**
c. If you are not sure of the nature of an infection, choose a non-occlusive dressing as the secondary dressing. Dressing frequency for infected pilonidal sinus wounds should be increased until the symptoms of the infection are progressively improving.
d. Implement strategies to prevent infection, i.e.:
   i. Proper hand washing
   ii. Adequate/appropriate hair removal in the natal cleft. **NOTE: the natal cleft should be shaved at least weekly in a 5cm wide strip extending at least 2.5cm from all edges of the wound, from the anal verge to the presacrum, using a razor designed specifically for the bikini area with a swivel razor head.**

5. Consider referrals to (see “Criteria for Interdisciplinary Referrals”):
   a. Registered Dietician (diet, nutrition, supplementation, weight control). **NOTE: to be most efficient, the following blood work could be ordered and the results obtained before making a dietician referral:** serum
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6. Teach the person and/or their caregiver, using adult education principles the importance of (you may need to consider interdisciplinary referrals):
   a. Changing dressings as per their schedule, and keeping dressings clean and dry at all times
   b. Removing soiled dressings before showering (bathing is
      NOT permitted). The person should shower (using liquid
      antibacterial soap) at least daily and may flush the wound
      with a hand held shower head during showers
   c. Quitting smoking
   d. The importance of good nutrition and hydration
   e. The importance of managing pain effectively
   f. The importance of ongoing follow-up with a health care
      provider at regular intervals
   g. Showering or cleansing the area after each bowel
      movement (keep moistened towelettes near the toilet to

**albumin, CBC (if anemic, proceed to checking Serum Iron, Total Iron Binding, Ferritin, Transferrin, B12 and Red Blood Cell Folate Level), BUN, Creatinine, and Potassium**

b. Speech Language Pathologist (presence or risk of developing a swallowing impairment)
c. Physician/Primary Care Nurse Practitioner (poorly controlled co-morbid health conditions, smoking cessation, medication adjustments)
d. Physiotherapy (mobility/exercise plan, adjunctive therapies for wound healing)
e. Occupational therapist (assistive devices, assessment of functional status)
f. Social Work (psychosocial and economic/community supports)
g. General Surgeon (consideration of pilonidal incision and drainage/curettage or natal cleft excision for recurrent pilonidal sinus wounds)
h. ET or WCS for wounds that have one or more of the following FUN criteria:
   i. **F** (Frequency) – frequency of dressing changes has not decreased to three times per week or less by week three
   ii. **U** (unknown) – the cause (etiology) of the wound is unknown, or the nurse is unsure of best practices
   iii. **N** (Number) – the surface area of the wound has not decreased 20-30% in 3-4 weeks of treatment, or there is not an ongoing decrease or reduction in wound surface area
7. Provide the person with the SWRWCPs “My Pilonidal Sinus” pamphlet and the “The Importance of Nutrition in Wound Healing” pamphlet, and review the pamphlet contents with them.
8. Re-evaluate (see “Guideline: Wound Re-Assessment and Consideration of the Use of Adjunctive/Advanced Therapy”):
   a. Regularly and consistently measure the wound, weekly at a minimum, using the same method
   b. Conduct a comprehensive reassessment to determine wound progress and the effectiveness of the treatment plan, i.e. using the “NPUAP PUSH Tool 3.0”, weekly at a minimum (see “Procedure: NPUAP PUSH Tool 3.0”). Identification of variances indicates the need for reassessment
   c. Calculate the % reduction in wound surface area to ensure that the wound has closed 20-30% after three to four weeks of treatment (predictor of timely healing). If the wound is not closing at an expected rate, reassess for additional correctable factors, infection, and pressure
   d. If the wound is not healing at an expected rate despite the implementation of best practice interventions, you may need to consider:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>1. Intended:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. The wound closes and drainage ceases, if the wound is deemed ‘healable’, i.e. the surface area of the wound reduces 20-30% in 3-4 weeks of treatment. OACCAC Pilonidal Sinus Outcome-Based Pathway (OBP) outcomes intervals (September 2013 release):</td>
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</tbody>
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### Interval 2 (28 days) – 20-30% reduction in surface area

### Interval 3 (60 days) – wound closed

b. The wound is maintained and infection free if the wound is deemed ‘maintenance or non-healing’

c. The person indicates that pain is resolved or manageable (less than 3/10) with appropriate use of analgesia/adjunctive/alternative methods

d. The person understands their role in preventing further tissue damage and incorporates recommended activities and interventions to treat risk factors

e. The person can identify signs and symptoms of infection, and can describe how, when and whom to call when problems occur

f. The person becomes independent in self-management of their wound

2. Unintended:

a. The wound dose not close in a timely fashion, if the wound is deemed ‘healable’

b. The wound becomes infected

c. The person expresses concerns about poorly managed pain

b. The person does not understand and/or act on their role in preventing further tissue damage and do not incorporate recommended activities and interventions to treat risk factors

e. The person does not understand the signs and symptoms of infection/complications, and when, how and whom to seek help from

f. The person does not become independent in self-management of their wound

### References


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**Related Tools**

**(NOTE: these tools and their instructions can be found on the SWRWCP’s website:**

(swrrwoundcareprogram.ca)

- The SWRWCP’s Pilonidal Sinus Wound Assessment and Management Algorithm
- Guideline: The Initial Assessment of People with Pilonidal Sinus Wounds
- SWRWCP’s Dressing Selection and Cleansing Enabler – HEALABLE
- Guideline and Procedures: Wound Debridement (excluding conservative sharp debridement)
- Guideline and Procedure: Conservative Sharp Wound Debridement
- Guideline: The Assessment and Management of Moisture in Acute and Chronic Wounds
- Guideline: The Assessment and Management of Bacterial Burden in Acute and Chronic Wounds
- SWRWCP’s Dressing Selection and Cleansing Enabler – MAINTENANCE/NON-HEALABLE
- Criteria for Interdisciplinary Referrals
- WHO Pain Ladder with Pain Management Guidelines
- Bacterial Burden in Chronic Wounds Tool
- Procedure: Bacterial Burden in Chronic Wounds Tool
- My Pilonidal Sinus pamphlet
- The Importance of Nutrition and Wound Healing pamphlet
- Guideline: Wound Re-Assessment and Consideration of the Use of Adjunctive/Advanced Therapy
- NPUAP PUSH Tool 3.0
- Procedure: NPUAP PUSH Tool 3.0
- Comprehensive Assessment of Chronic Pain in Wounds tool
- Procedure: Comprehensive Assessment of Chronic Pain in Wounds tool
- Cardiff Wound Impact (Quality of Life) Questionnaire
- Procedure: Cardiff Wound Impact (Quality of Life) Questionnaire
- Initial Wound Assessment Form