

What are anal tags?

Anal tags are usually excess pieces of skin and underlying fatty and fibrous tissue. They may start as quite small dimples in the skin around the anus but as time passes wiping and the action of the anal canal may cause them to grow to quite a large size such that they occasionally hang down as 'dog ears'.

Are they dangerous?

The tags are almost NEVER related to cancer. If there is any question of the tags being abnormal you will be told about that prior to any surgery. Simple tags do NOT become cancerous even if left for a long time but they can become inflamed and angry causing bleeding and irritation in some people.

What other problems do they cause?

The commonest problems with tags are difficulty keeping the anal skin clean and irritation caused by wiping the tags and the skin around.

Why do they form?

The commonest reason for tags to start is a split (fissure) or infection (abscess) in the anus which causes a little bit of excess skin to be left behind. This then starts the tag off, which can slowly get bigger even if the original problem has gone away.

What happens after surgery?

The operation to remove the tags must try to remove all the excess skin to reduce the risk of a new tag forming in the future. This means that the tags must be cut off and a small flat 'disc' of skin will be left where the tag was. This is obviously a little raw patch. This little 'ulcer' will heal up of its own accord. This happens perfectly well even with the passage of stools as per normal. There is no need to put any stitches in the operation site and you will not have any to be removed. The raw spot will heal in the next 7 to 10 days although it may still be sensitive for 2 to 3 weeks in all.

During the healing phase the wound will be sore. You should take care when wiping and it is sometimes best to wash your bottom clean for the first few days.

You can use local anaesthetic gels and creams including haemorrhoid creams from the chemist if these help. Regular Paracetamol or simple painkillers will also be helpful in the first few days.

Do I need to be seen again?

It is often not necessary to check that the wound has healed up. If the tags were part of one or more problems with the anus, we often see patients to check that there are no bothersome symptoms remaining once the tags have been removed.

If you are having persistent pain in the area of the operation or if the pain continues to get worse in the first few days after the operation you may need to be seen again. You should telephone to check the symptoms and if necessary we can arrange to see you.



*Removal
of anal tags*

Patient Information

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