

Anal Sphincter Repair

What Is An Anal Sphincter Repair

Anal sphincter repair is a surgical procedure designed to restore the function of the anal sphincter muscle if you are experiencing anal incontinence. This condition can result from damage to the sphincter, often caused by childbirth or previous anorectal surgery. The goal of the procedure is to reconstruct the muscle, helping to improve bowel control and reduce symptoms of incontinence.

Who Is This Surgery For?

You may be recommended for anal sphincter repair if you experience:

- **Loss of bowel control** due to sphincter muscle damage
- **Persistent leakage of stool or gas**, even after trying non-surgical treatments
- **A confirmed defect in the anal sphincter muscle**, identified through clinical examination or imaging

Before considering surgery, your specialist will explore non-surgical options, such as pelvic floor physiotherapy, dietary changes, and medications. If these do not provide sufficient relief, surgical repair may be the best option.

What Does The Operation Involve?

This surgery is performed under **general anaesthetic**. The key steps include:

- **Bowel preparation** – You will be given an enema before surgery to clear your lower bowel
- **Surgical approach** – Your surgeon will make a small incision between the vagina and anus to access the damaged muscle
- **Muscle reconstruction** – The damaged muscle will be separated from scar tissue, and the two ends will be overlapped using a double-breasted technique to restore function
- **Wound closure** – The incision will be closed with dissolvable stitches

- **Surgical duration** – The procedure typically takes around 60 minutes

What are the risks?

As with any surgery, anal sphincter repair carries some risks. Your specialist will discuss these with you before the operation.

- **Bleeding** – You may notice some light bleeding from the wound, which usually settles within the first week
- **Infection** – If the surgical site becomes infected, you may need a course of antibiotics
- **Wound separation** – In some cases, the external wound may partially open, which can prolong healing but rarely causes significant problems
- **Blood clots (DVT/PE)** – To reduce this risk, you will be given compression stockings and blood-thinning injections while in hospital

Most patients recover without complications, and the long-term success of the procedure is improved with proper post-operative care and physiotherapy.

What Happens After The Operation?

Your initial recovery will be monitored in hospital.

In hospital

- You will usually stay in hospital for 3-5 days
- A drip will be in place for 24 hours to keep you hydrated
- A catheter, if needed, is usually removed the day after surgery

At home

- **Pain management** – Most patients need only simple oral painkillers after the first 24 hours
- **Stool softeners** – You will be prescribed a regular stool softener for 4-6 weeks to prevent straining

- **Physical activity** – Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity for at least 6 weeks
- **Driving** – You can usually resume driving within 2 weeks, but this depends on your recovery
- **Pelvic floor physiotherapy** – This may be recommended to strengthen the muscles and support long-term bowel control
- **Full recovery** – It may take several weeks to determine how successful the procedure has been

Your consultant will arrange a follow-up appointment to monitor your progress and advise on any further treatments if needed.

Why Choose The Midlands Bowel Clinic?

- **Specialist colorectal surgeons** with extensive experience in sphincter repair
- **Minimally invasive techniques** where possible to support a faster recovery
- **Personalised care plans**, including thorough assessments before and after surgery
- **Dedicated pelvic floor support**, with access to physiotherapy to optimise results
- **State-of-the-art facilities**, providing the latest diagnostic and treatment options

Contact Us

If you have any questions about anal sphincter repair or would like to discuss your treatment options, please contact the Midlands Bowel Clinic. Our team is here to support you throughout your journey to recovery.