

Lift Procedure

What Is The Lift Procedure?

The LIFT procedure (ligation of the intersphincteric fistula tract) is a surgical technique used to treat anal fistulas while protecting the anal sphincter muscles. It is designed to close the fistula tract and prevent infections without affecting bowel control.

This procedure is often recommended for complex fistulas that pass through the anal sphincter muscles where other treatments may carry a higher risk of incontinence.

Why Might You Need A Lift Procedure?

Your doctor may recommend the LIFT procedure if you have an anal fistula, which is an abnormal connection between the anal canal and the skin around the anus. Fistulas are often caused by:

- **An abscess that has burst** and created a tunnel
- **Crohn's disease or other inflammatory bowel conditions**
- **Previous surgery or trauma** that affected the anal area
- **Infections in the anal glands** that have not healed properly

The LIFT procedure is particularly useful when the fistula passes through the anal sphincter muscles, as it helps preserve muscle function and reduces the risk of incontinence.

How Does The Lift Procedure Work?

- The fistula tract is carefully identified between the layers of the anal sphincter muscles
- The surgeon makes a small incision in the skin near the anus to access the fistula
- The fistula tract is tied off and cut, preventing further infection and allowing healing
- The internal and external openings of the fistula are sealed to close the tract

- The incision is then closed with dissolvable stitches

The procedure usually takes 30 to 60 minutes and is performed under general anaesthetic.

What Happens After The Procedure?

- You may have some mild pain or swelling in the area after surgery
- You can eat and drink normally after the procedure
- Pain relief and stool softeners may be recommended to help with bowel movements
- You should avoid straining, heavy lifting, and intense exercise for a few weeks
- Most people return to normal activities within a few days, but you may need time to adjust as the area heals

How Do You Care For The Area After Surgery?

- Keep the area clean and dry to prevent infection
- Wash gently with warm water after bowel movements
- Avoid using scented soaps or wipes that may cause irritation
- Wear a pad or soft tissue to absorb any minor leakage
- Take stool softeners if needed to reduce discomfort

If you experience increased pain, swelling, or signs of infection, contact your consultant.

How Successful Is The Lift Procedure?

The LIFT procedure has a high success rate for closing the fistula while protecting the anal sphincter muscles. However, in some cases, the fistula may return and require further treatment. Your consultant will monitor your healing and discuss any additional steps if needed.

Are There Any Risks?

The LIFT procedure is safe and effective, but as with any surgery, there are some risks:

- **Mild discomfort or swelling** around the surgical site
- **Infection**, which is rare if proper hygiene is maintained
- **Recurrence of the fistula**, which may require further treatment
- **Minor bleeding**, which usually settles on its own

If you experience severe pain, fever, or excessive bleeding, seek medical advice.

Why Choose The Midlands Bowel Clinic?

- **Expert colorectal surgeons** experienced in fistula treatments
- **Advanced diagnostic tools**, including MRI and endoanal ultrasound for precise assessment
- **Personalised treatment plans** tailored to your condition
- **Comprehensive aftercare and follow-up support** to ensure the best outcome

Contact Us

If you have an anal fistula and need advice on LIFT procedure treatment, please contact the Midlands Bowel Clinic. We are here to help.