

### **Definition**

An abnormal duct or passage resulting from injury, disease, or a congenital disorder that connects an abscess, cavity, or hollow organ to the body surface or to another hollow organ. Ongoing pain, swelling, and tenderness are symptoms of both anal abscess and fistulas. You may also experience drainage of pus and fluid from the abscess, which can cause irritation and itching in the skin around the anus. Other symptoms include fever, chills, fatigue or weakness.

### **What is fistula?**

Generally speaking, a fistula is a small tunnel or tract that connects one surface in the body to another. Fistulas can occur at different places in the body. When one occurs between the internal anal canal and the exterior skin of the body near the anus, it is called anal fistula. When one occurs between the rectum and the vagina, it is called a recto-vaginal fistula.

### **Definition**

A fistula is an abnormal connection between an organ, vessel, or intestine and another structure. Fistulas are usually the result of injury or surgery. It can also result from infection or inflammation.

Inflammatory bowel disease, such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, is an example of a disease that leads to fistulas between one loop of intestine and another. Injury can lead to fistulas between arteries and veins.

### **Information**

Fistulas may occur in many parts of the body. Some of these are:

Arteriovenous (between an artery and vein)

Biliary (created during gallbladder surgery, connecting bile ducts to the surface of the skin)

Cervical (either an abnormal opening into the cervix or in the neck)

Craniosinus (between the space inside the skull and a nasal sinus)

Enterovaginal (between the bowel and vagina)

Fecal or anal (the feces is discharged through an opening other than the anus)

Gastric (from the stomach to the surface of the skin)

Metroperitoneal (between the uterus and peritoneal cavity)

Pulmonary arteriovenous (in a lung, the pulmonary artery and vein are connected, allowing the blood to bypass the oxygenation process in the lung (pulmonary arteriovenous fistula )

Umbilical (connection between the navel and gut)

### **Types of fistulas include:**

Blind (open on one end only, but connects to two structures)

Complete (has both external and internal openings)

Horseshoe (connecting the anus to the surface of the skin after going around the rectum)

Incomplete (a tube from the skin that is closed on the inside and does not connect to any internal structure)