

# Radially emitting laser fibre treatment of an anal fistula

Information for the public

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There is not much good evidence about how well this procedure works or how safe it is for treating anal fistulas. But there are no major safety concerns. This procedure can be used but only when patients are having regular checks to see how well it is working or if it has caused problems. This is because of the concerns about its long-term effects and the risk of serious complications.

An anal fistula is a narrow tunnel that forms between the end of the bowel and the skin near the anus. It may cause pain or discomfort, and leak blood or pus. In this procedure, the fistula is cleaned and a fibre containing a laser is put into the fistula. Laser energy is emitted all around the fibre (radially) and the fibre is then gradually withdrawn. The aim is to destroy and seal off the fistula.

The [NHS website](#) may be a good place to find out more. NICE's information on [interventional procedures guidance](#) has more about what a procedure is and how we assess them.

## Is this procedure right for me?

If you've been offered this procedure, your healthcare professionals should discuss with you what is involved, and tell you about the risks and benefits. They should talk with you about your options, and listen carefully to your views and concerns. Your family can be involved too, if you wish. All of this should happen before you agree (consent) to have the procedure. You should also be told how to find more information about the procedure. Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Some questions to think about

- What does the procedure involve?
- What are the possible benefits? How likely am I to get them?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- What happens if the procedure doesn't work or something goes wrong?
- What happens if I don't want the procedure? Are there other treatments available?

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