

Description

Incision (cut) and drainage is a procedure to drain pus from an abscess.

Incision and drainage, or I&D, is a common treatment for an abscess. An abscess, or infection with pus, may not heal well on its own or even with antibiotics. The pus usually needs to be drained to promote healing.

Purpose

- To treat an abscess
- To drain pus, to promote healing

Steps

Pre-procedure education:

- Obtain informed consent
- Inform the patient of potential severe complications and their treatment
- Explain the steps of the procedure, including the not insignificant pain associated with anesthetic infiltration
- Explain necessity for follow-up, including packing change or removal

Procedure

- Use universal precautions
- Cleanse site over abscess with skin prep
- Drape to create a sterile field
- Infiltrate local anesthetic and allow 2-3 minutes for anesthetic to take effect
- Incise widely over abscess with the #11 blade, cutting through the skin into the abscess cavity. Follow skin fold lines whenever able while making the incision
- Allow the pus to drain, using the gauzes to soak up drainage and blood. Use culture swab to take culture of abscess contents, swabbing inside the abscess cavity
- Use the hemostat to gently explore the abscess cavity to break up any loculations within the abscess
- Using the packing strip, pack the abscess cavity
- Place gauze dressing over wound, and tape in place

Test your knowledge

Why do you think I & D should be done if there is an abscess?

Why is it important to obtain an informed consent for the patient, before the procedure?

How are you going to answer the patient when they ask if the procedure hurts?

What do you think are the risks of Abscess Incision and Drainage?
