



[Home](#) → [Health Topics](#) → [Fistulas](#)

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Fistulas

A fistula is an abnormal connection between two parts inside of the body. Fistulas may develop between different organs, such as between the esophagus and the windpipe or the bowel and the vagina. They can also develop between two blood vessels, such as between an artery and a vein or between two arteries.

Some people are born with a fistula. Other common causes of fistulas include:

- Complications from surgery
- Injury
- Infection
- Diseases, such as Crohn's disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/crohnsdisease.html>] or ulcerative colitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ulcerativecolitis.html>]

Treatment depends on the cause of the fistula, where it is, and how bad it is. Some fistulas will close on their own. In some cases, you may need antibiotics and/or surgery.

Diagnosis and Tests

- CT Enterography [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/CTenterography>]
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/CTenterography>]
- Fistulogram/Sinogram [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/fistulogram-sinogram>]
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/fistulogram-sinogram>]
- Lower GI Series (Barium Enema) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/lower-gi-series>]
 (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/transito-gastrointestinal-inferior>]
- MR Enterography [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/MRenterography>]
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/MRenterography>]


Treatments and Therapies

- Embolization of Brain Aneurysms and Arteriovenous Malformations/Fistulas [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/dc-embol>]
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/dc-embol>]
- Intracranial Vascular Treatments [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/IntracranialVasc>]
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/IntracranialVasc>]

Specifics

- Anal Abscess and Fistula [<https://fascrs.org/patients/diseases-and-conditions/a-z/abscess-and-fistula-expanded-information>]  (American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons)
Also in Spanish [<https://fascrs.org/patients/diseases-and-conditions/a-z/absceso-anal-y-la-fistula>]
- Anatomic Problems of the Lower GI Tract [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/anatomic-problems-lower-gi-tract>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/problemas-anatomicos-parte-inferior-del-aparato-digestivo>]
- Arteriovenous Fistula [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/arteriovenous-fistula/symptoms-causes/syc-20369567?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/arteriovenous-fistula/symptoms-causes/syc-20369567?p=1>]
- Arteriovenous Malformations (AVMs) [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/arteriovenous-malformations-avms>]  (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Perilymph Fistula [<https://vestibular.org/article/diagnosis-treatment/types-of-vestibular-disorders/perilymph-fistula/>]
(Vestibular Disorders Association)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Fistula [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Fistula%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Epithelialized chimeric repairing patch supports in situ healing of tracheal fistula. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/39951529>]
- Article: Efficacy and safety of stem cell therapy for fistula management: an... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/39468970>]
- Article: Postoperative Late Hearing Deterioration in Cholesteatoma with Labyrinthine Fistulas. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/39145739>]

Find an Expert

- American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons [<https://fascrs.org/>]

Children

- Esophageal Atresia and Tracheoesophageal Fistula [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/esophageal-atresia-and-tracheoesophageal-fistula/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/atresia-esofagica-y-fistula-traqueoesofagica-es/?adfree=true>]
- Tracheoesophageal fistula repair - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100103_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100103_1.htm]

Women

- Rectovaginal Fistula [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/rectovaginal-fistula/symptoms-causes/syc-20377108?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/rectovaginal-fistula/symptoms-causes/syc-20377108?p=1>]
- Vaginal Fistula [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/vaginal-fistulas/symptoms-causes/syc-20355762?p=1>]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/vaginal-fistulas/symptoms-causes/syc-20355762?p=1>]

Patient Handouts

- **Fistula** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002365.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002365.htm>]
- **Gastrointestinal fistula** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001129.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001129.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Esophageal atresia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000961.htm>]
- Fistula [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002365.htm>]
- Gastrointestinal fistula [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001129.htm>]
- Pulmonary arteriovenous fistula [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001090.htm>]
- Tracheoesophageal fistula and esophageal atresia repair [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002934.htm>]
- Tracheoesophageal fistula repair - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100103_1.htm]

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