

PRURITUS ANI

Pruritus Ani is itching around the opening of the back passage or anus.

It is a common problem. Although it is seldom caused by serious disease, it can be very troublesome and frustrating. Most cases are caused by irritation from hairy buttocks rubbing against each other, which is further aggravated by the irritating effect of sweat and leakage of faecal material. This irritation must be reduced to allow the problem to settle.

General Advice:

- Clean the anus carefully after bowel movements – use soft toilet paper, moist tissues or a bidet. Pat gently.
- Use Emulave wash or aqueous cream in place of soap for washing. This leaves a protective layer on the skin and avoids the irritant effect of soap. Use your fingers – not a flannel.
- Wear loose, soft cotton underwear. Avoid any tight clothing that keeps the buttocks pressed together, such as tight jeans. Free circulation of air is important.
- Wear pyjamas.
- Eat a high fibre diet with plenty of cereals, fruit and vegetables. This avoids straining when passing a bowel motion, which can lead to haemorrhoids (piles) and constipation. These can lead to cracks in the anus.
- Lose weight, if appropriate, as obesity reduces ventilation of the perianal skin.
- Apply any prescribed medication carefully at bedtime.
- Apply Zinc & Castor Oil regularly during the day and before exercise as this acts as a lubricant and barrier cream.

Avoid Aggravating Factors:

- Do not apply any other preparation to your anus unless recommended by your doctors as it may cause an allergic rash.
- Do not use any bath additives such as bubble bath, radox or aromatherapy oils as these can irritate the delicate skin around the anus.
- Do not apply talcum powder, as this tends to coalesce into small lumps in the crevices.
- Do not eat spicy foods, such as chillies, or irritant foods, such as nuts and popcorn. Other foods known to cause problems include citrus fruit, tomatoes, pork, beer, coffee and tea.
- Try not to open your bowels more than once or twice per day. Frequent bowel motions are usually soft or fluid and cause more irritation.

Remember:

Pruritus Ani can be a stubborn condition that often needs months of careful treatment. Try not to scratch!

(Ref: Dermatology Papers – Pruritus Ani)