



ANAL FISSURE



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A laceration, tear, or crack in the lining of the anus. It affects all age groups, including infants.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Sharp pain with passage of a hard or bulky stool. The pain may last up to an hour, and returns with the next bowel movement.
- Pain when sitting on a hard surface.
- Streaks of blood on the toilet paper, underwear, or diaper.
- Itching around the rectum.
- Refusal to have a bowel movement (in children).

CAUSES

The exact cause is unknown. Symptoms usually occur after the stretching of the anus from a large, hard stool.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Constipation or prolonged diarrhea.
- Multiple pregnancies.
- Crohn's disease.
- Medical disorders of the body's immune system.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Avoid constipation by:

Drinking at least 8 glasses of water daily.

Eating a diet high in fiber.

Using stool softeners or other laxatives, if needed.

- Don't strain when at the stool.
- Avoid anal intercourse.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Most fissures heal on their own. Others can be corrected with surgery. Most infants and young children recover after the stool is softened.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Fissure may become chronic and fail to heal.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam of the anus and rectum to confirm the diagnosis. Other medical tests are usually not needed.
- Gently clean the anus with soap and water after each bowel movement.
- To relieve muscle spasms and pain around the anus, apply a warm towel to the area.
- Sitz baths also relieve pain. Use 8 inches of warm water in the bathtub, 2 or 3 times a day for 10 to 20 minutes.
- Minor surgery may be needed to remove the fissure if conservative treatment is not successful.

MEDICATIONS

- For minor pain, use nonprescription drugs, such as acetaminophen or topical anesthetics.
- Zinc oxide ointment or petroleum jelly applied to the anal opening may help prevent any burning sensation.
- Bulk stool softeners will help to avoid the pain occurring with hard bowel movements.
- Lidocaine ointment may be recommended.
- Botox injections may help relax the sphincter muscles

ACTIVITY

No restrictions. Physical activity reduces the likelihood of constipation.

DIET

Eat a high-fiber diet and drink extra fluids to prevent constipation.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or your child has symptoms of an anal fissure.
- Pain continues despite treatment.