



# ANAL FISTULA



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

A very small tube or tract that leads from the anal canal (the last part of the rectum) to the skin near the anal opening. Watery pus drains through this opening and causes irritation to the skin.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Discharge from the anus.
- Can feel a firm and tender lump.
- Pain during or after bowel movement.
- Skin color change of the skin surrounding fistula.

### CAUSES

- Infection from a tear in the anal canal lining.
- May be due to an injury, rectal infection (including chlamydia), cancer, and radiation therapy.
- Tissue damage because of an abscess (a pocket of pus).

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Puncture wound in anal canal lining (e.g., from eating an eggshell or fishbone) or injury from an enema tip.
- Injection treatment for internal hemorrhoids.
- Inflammatory bowel disease.
- Acute appendicitis or diverticulitis.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

No specific preventive steps.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Some fissures heal on their own. In others, surgical results are usually excellent.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Constipation.
- Fissure may recur.



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

## GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam of the anal area to confirm the diagnosis.
- Sitz baths help relieve discomfort. Sit in a tub of warm water (not hot) for 10 to 15 minutes several times a day. Dry the area carefully and completely after bathing.
- If it does not heal on its own, minor surgery can correct the fissure. It is usually done with local anesthetic on an outpatient basis. Follow your health care provider's instructions for after surgery care.

## MEDICATIONS

- Stool softeners may be prescribed to prevent constipation.
- Antibiotics may be prescribed if infection is present.

## ACTIVITY

Resume work and normal activity as soon as possible.

## DIET

Consume a regular diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has any symptoms of an anal fissure.
- Symptoms recur after treatment.