

Pruritis Ani

What is pruritis ani?

Itching of the anal area.

General advice to reduce itching

- Wash morning, evening and after each bowel action
- Soap irritates – use a soap substitute such as AQUEOUS CREAM
- Be sure to remove particles of faeces from peri-anal hairs and skin furrows
- Do not rub – be gentle, use a soft cloth/cotton wool and plain tepid water to rinse
- Pat dry with a soft towel/cotton wool.
- When away from home, use pre-moistened tissues (available from chemists) but avoid those with alcohol (spirit) or perfume, which will sting. If nothing else is available, toilet tissue moistened with water or saliva is better than nothing.

Prevention

- Keep the area as dry as possible – if you sweat profusely, try special drying powder such as 'Zeasorb' from the chemist (ordinary talc may collect in lumps)
- Avoid perfumed products that can cause allergies.
- Never keep a wet dressing in prolonged contact with the anal skin.
- Use 100% cotton underwear rather than nylon.
 - Women: avoid tights. Stockings or crotchless tights are better.
 - a loose skirt is better than tight jeans. Whenever possible, go without knickers.
 - Men: Wear boxer shorts and loose trousers.
- Avoid ointments and creams unless prescribed by a specialist – they may make the skin worse, and may cause allergy, especially anaesthetic creams. Inflamed, infected skin may need a topical steroid/antiseptic application.
- Avoid diarrhoea – some foods cause upsets and loose bowels – avoid foods which do this to you.
- Avoid constipation – keep bowels regular with plenty of high fibre foods. Straining to pass a motion means you need more fibre. Coarse bran is unsuitable, as undigested flakes stick to the anal area and make cleaning difficult. A bulk-forming laxative may suit you better – ask your doctor or chemist for advice.
- Avoid trauma – light (cotton) gloves worn in bed help prevent scratching.

Healing

If your skin is moist, try 'Potassium Permanganate' (available from chemists).
Method – dissolve 3 crystals in a small bowl of warm water to make a weak, pale pink solution. Apply a compress soaked in this for 10 minutes, twice daily.

As your condition improves, relax the routine a little, but always continue with general cleansing measures. If the condition returns, start the full routine again.

Contact information

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