

Anal Fissure Info

By Andrea Brett, RM

An **anal fissure** is an unnatural crack or tear in the anal skin. As a fissure, these tiny tears may show as bright red rectal bleeding and cause severe periodic pain after defecation.

Most anal fissures are caused by stretching of the anal mucosa beyond its capability. Many acute anal fissures will heal spontaneously. Some fissures become chronic and will not heal. The most common cause for this is spasm of the internal anal sphincter muscle. This spasm causes poor blood flow to the anal mucosa, hence producing an ulcer which does not heal since it is deprived of normal blood supply.

Anal fissures are common in women after childbirth because of hormonal changes and after difficult bowel movements.

Most anal fissures are shallow or superficial (less than a quarter of inch or 0.64 cm deep). These fissures usually self-heal within a couple of weeks.

Prevention

- It is important to eat a diet rich in fibre and to remember to drink plenty of water. When you are pregnant you should drink a minimum of 2 litres of water per day.
- Don't strain while having a bowel movement.

Treatment

Whether the cause is constipation or just hormonal changes that affect the anal mucosal lining a fibre supplement can help healing. It makes the stool easier to pass and also makes the stool less irritating to the sore area.

Make your own supplemental fibre. Mix ground flax seeds and psyllium husks - 1 part to 1 part (50/50) *both found at your local health food store. (You can buy the flax whole and grind it in the coffee grinder at home in order to get the additional benefits of the omega 3 oils – freshly ground means the natural oils are preserved).

Take a heaping tablespoon of the mixture once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Mix with a small amount of juice and drink quickly. Follow with a large glass of water immediately. *This is really important as increased fibre without increased fluids can actually increase constipation and make the problem worse.

Treatment Continued

Prior to each bowel movement use Anusol Plus Ointment (this has an anesthetic). *Be sure to lubricate the tip of the applicator well as to not further damage the sensitive area. This works by coating the area and protects it from the stool and therefore speeds healing. Alternatively, you can use Prep H suppositories (main binding agent is cocoa butter). This also works well to coat and protect the area prior to a BM. However, it would need to be inserted in the rectum at least an hour before a BM and perhaps over night to help it melt from your body heat and therefore coat the affected area.\

For a fully natural remedy try Fissureheal suppositories or a comfrey salve made by A.Vogel you can purchase either of these products from Finlandia Pharmacy in Vancouver or online at finlandiapharmacy.com.

Keep these steps up for 2-3 days after the fissure has healed to ensure the fissure has completely healed.

Tips

- Use a moist wipe instead of perfumed and harsh toilet paper.
- Taking a sitz bath can help soothe the sore area.

* It is important to inform your healthcare provider or midwife of your condition to get the most appropriate advice about treatment.

