PRURITIS ANI

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Pruritus is a latin word meaning itching. Pruritus ani means itching around the back passage (anus). These notes should help you understand how it happens and how to deal with it.

WHAT CAUSES PRURITUS ANI?

The main cause is stool irritating the nearby skin. This is made worse by:

- Looseness of the bowels
- Poor control of the bowels
- Lumpy skin around the back passage
- Skin infection or eczema
- Infection in the stool
- Sweating aggravated by synthetic underwear
- Overheating
- Scratching leading to more itching
- Over enthusiastic cleansing with irritant soap
- Some trouble with the back passage such as piles

DIAGNOSIS

The first step is to rule out any obvious cause in the back passage. The surgeon will examine you and inspect the anus and surrounding skin and sometimes use a proctoscope or sigmoidoscope (special telescope) to view the affected area. Sometimes a biopsy of the skin is necessary to establish a diagnosis.

TREATMENT

A specific cause will be treated as necessary, but there is general advice that will be helpful.

KEEP CLEAN

Wash your bottom twice a day with clean water. Do not use soap.
Pat the skin dry with cotton wool
Do not use toilet paper.

KEEP COOL

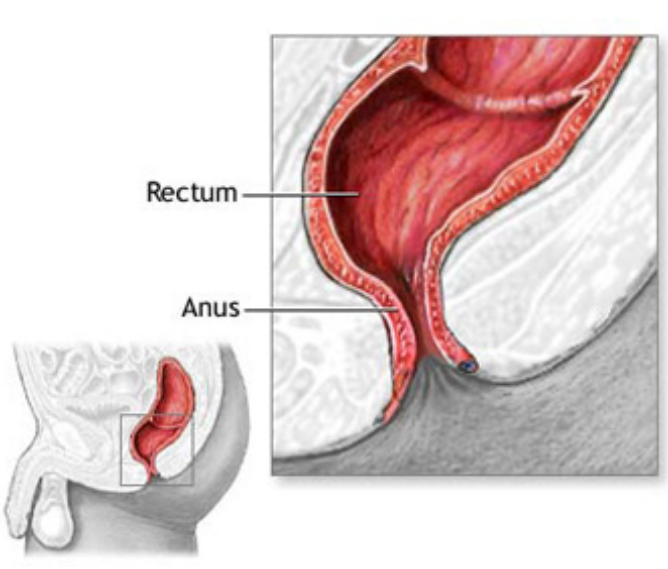
Wear loose underwear (boxer shorts, not Y fronts)
Wear loose overclothes (Baggy trousers)
Wear loose nightwear
Remove excess bedding
Lose weight to lighten the buttocks
Shaving can help.

KEEP DRY

Dry the skin completely after washing.
Use talcum powder (without additives).
For one week use an ointment as prescribed (Scheriproct, Proctosedyl, Quadriderm or Zinc and Vio-form).
Pinch firmly any skin to control itching.
Do not scratch.
Do not use any antiseptics, TCP, soap, or detergents.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Pruritis ani is fairly common and can range from mild discomfort to severe irritation. You should be able to control the itching using the steps listed above, but pruritis can come and go for years. There may be times when it flares up and other periods where you may be completely symptom-free.





These notes give an overall guide to your problem. You may see some differences in the details of your treatment, since it is tailored to suit your own condition.