

## Anal Pruritus (Anal Itching)

Anal Pruritus is itching of the anus or the surrounding skin. The anus is the last part of the digestive system. Anal itching can cause discomfort and embarrassment.

### Causes of Anal Pruritus

- Stool gets stuck to the skin around the anus. This is more likely to occur if you have diarrhea or soft bowel movements
- Hemorrhoids: swollen veins in the rectum, or outside the anus
- Certain foods or drinks that are acidic can irritate the anus such as: coffee, tea, beer, cola, chocolate, tomatoes, oranges, or grapefruit
- Diseases affecting the anus such as: anal abscess, anal fistula, cancer, skin diseases (psoriasis or dermatitis), and skin diseases caused by an infection with a bacteria or fungus

### How to Relieve Itching

- Thoroughly cleanse anal area after a bowel movement, by gently wiping using a moist pad or tissue, or by showering
- **DO NOT** use cleaning lotions such as witch hazel. This can make symptoms worse
- Take a shower or a bath after a bowel movement, rinsing anal area with warm water. Avoid soap. Pat area dry with a soft towel.
- Wear cotton underwear
- Keep undergarments dry. Apply a sanitary pad in undergarments if you experience anal leakage; change when soiled
- Apply anti-itch ointment
  - Examples are:
  - Preparation H (DO NOT USE FOR MORE THAN 2 WEEKS)
  - Recticare Cream
- Apply over-the-counter Zinc Oxide skin ointment, such as:
  - Desitin
  - Calmoseptine
- Avoid foods or drinks that cause anal itching or diarrhea
- Consult a physician if itching does not resolve