

*Better  
Together*

## Patient information

### **Pruritus Ani**

Surgical Division Royal Liverpool Hospital and  
Broadgreen Hospital

## **What is Pruritus Ani?**

Pruritus Ani is the common condition of itching or irritation around the anus (back passage). It has many different possible causes, including piles and certain skin conditions.

However, the most common cause is a minor leakage from the anus. If small amounts of stool (bowel motion) or liquid mucus leak from the anus, this can irritate the delicate skin around the anus.

## **What can you do to help yourself**

Pruritus is often difficult to treat, and it may take many months of gentle care to improve things. There are some things that you can do to help:

### **Personal Hygiene**

- Pay special attention to hygiene. Be careful to keep the area as clean as possible, ideally by careful washing and drying at least once a day and after each bowel motion.
- If you do not have access to a bidet, you may find that sitting on the edge of the bath and using a shower head (if available) makes washing easier. If you are out or at work, take a small bottle of water into the toilet with you to wash with after each bowel motion.
- People find that cold water is more soothing than warm.
- Never use soaps with a strong perfume or any antiseptics on your bottom.
- Use very soft white toilet paper or moist toilet tissue. Avoid the use of a flannel.

- If you have a problem with leakage from your anus, a small amount of damp cotton wool on your finger tip may be used to gently clean into the anus to make sure there is no residue left behind.
- If your leakage continues after wiping, a small plug of cotton wool in your anus may stop the stool from coming out and irritating your skin.
- Dry the area by gentle patting with a soft towel or tissue. Avoid rubbing. If you are very sore you may find that a hair dryer on a low setting is the most comfortable way of drying the area.
- Try to avoid scratching the area, however tempting this may be. If the itching becomes unbearable and you really have to do something to relieve irritation, gently pinch it with your fingers outside your clothes. If you find that you are scratching in your sleep at night, get some cotton gloves (available from your chemist).
- Never use anything on your bottom except the treatment suggested by your doctor. This includes all creams, deodorants, talcum powder and antiseptics.
- Never put anything in your bath water. In particular, avoid all antiseptics, salt, bath salts, bath oil and bubble bath.
- Wear loose cotton underwear and change daily. Avoid all man-made fabrics coming into contact with your bottom. Women should wear stockings or open-crotch tights rather than regular tights, which can cause sweating. You should also avoid tight trousers or jeans, and sitting on plastic chairs for long periods.
- Wash your underwear in non-biological washing powder, and make sure that all trace of detergent is rinsed out.

- Try to establish a regular bowel habit.
- A diet high in fibre make the stools softer and more likely to leak out. You can try to make your stools firmer, and therefore less likely to leak, by cutting down the amount on fibre in your diet. This means avoiding foods like bran cereals, muesli, beans, peas and pulses, nuts and moderate your intake of fruit and vegetables, particularly with skins on.
- If you are leaking soft stool, your doctor may prescribe a low dose of a medicine such as Loperamide to make your stools firmer and less likely to leak.
- Some people find that highly spiced food and alcohol makes irritation worse, and it is worth trying to avoid these, at least for a limited time to see if it helps.
- Use any prescribed treatment exactly as instructed, and keep using it until after the itching has stopped altogether. Wash off the previous application before you put any more on.

**Patient Notes:**

## Further information

Colorectal Lifestyle Nurse  
Royal Liverpool University Hospital  
Tel: 0151 706 3456

**Author:** Colorectal Lifestyle Nurse (Reproduced with kind permission of St Mark's Hospital)

**Review date:** April 2013

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

يمكن توفير جميع المعلومات المتعلقة بالمرضى الموافق عليهم من قبل انتماء المستشفى عند الطلب بصيغ أخرى، بما في ذلك لغات أخرى وبطرق تسهل قراءتها وبالحروف الطباعة الكبيرة وبالصوت وبطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبطريقة مون والكترونيا.

所有經信托基金批准的患者資訊均可以其它格式提供，包括其它語言、易讀閱讀軟件、大字

體、音頻、盲文、穆恩體 ( Moon ) 盲文和電子格式，敬請索取。

در صورت تمایل می‌توانید کلیه اطلاعات تصویب شده توسط اتحادیه در رابطه با بیماران را به اشکال مختلف در دسترس داشته باشید، از جمله به زبانهای دیگر، به زبان ساده، چاپ درشت، صوت، خط مخصوص کوران، مون و بصورت روی خطی موجود است.

زانیاری پیوندیدار بهو نه‌خوشانه‌ی له‌لایین تراسته‌وه پامهند کراون، نه‌گم داوا بکرت له فورمه‌کانی تردا بریتی له زمانه‌کانی تر، نیز ی رید (هاسان خوینده‌وه)، چایی گموره، شریتی دهنگ، هیلی موون و نلیکترۆنیکي همیه.

所有经信托基金批准的患者信息均可以其它格式提供，包括其它语言、易读阅读软件、大字  
体、音频、盲文、穆恩体 (Moon) 盲文和电子格式，敬请索取。

Dhammaan warbixinta bukaanleyda ee Ururka ee la oggol yahay waxaa marka la codsado lagu heli karaa nuskhado kale, sida luqado kale, akhris fudud, far waaweyn, dhegeysi, farta braille ee dadka indhaha la', Moon iyo nidaam eletaroonig ah.