



Anal Fissures

Anal fissures are small tears in the lining of the anal canal, the final part of the digestive tract. They can cause discomfort, pain, and bleeding during bowel movements. While they can affect anyone, they are most common in infants and middle-aged adults.

What is an Anal Fissure?

An anal fissure is a small tear in the thin, moist tissue (mucosa) that lines the anus. This tear can cause pain and bleeding during and after bowel movements. Anal fissures can be acute, lasting less than six weeks, or chronic, lasting more than six weeks. Most anal fissures occur at the posterior or anterior midline of the anus. Fissures located elsewhere may indicate an underlying condition that requires further medical investigation.

Causes of Anal Fissures

Anal fissures are often caused by trauma to the anal canal. This can occur due to passing hard stools, chronic constipation, or diarrhea. Other causes include childbirth, previous anal surgery, and certain diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease or sexually transmitted infections.

Symptoms of Anal Fissures

The most common symptoms of an anal fissure include sharp pain during bowel movements, burning or itching in the anal area, and fresh, red blood in the stool. Some people may also experience muscle spasms in the anus or notice a small lump near the tear.

Diagnosis of Anal Fissures

Diagnosing an anal fissure typically involves a medical history review and a physical examination. During the examination, a healthcare provider may gently inspect the anal region. In many cases, the tear is visible, and this examination is all that's needed to diagnose an anal fissure. However, further testing may be recommended if the healthcare provider suspects an underlying condition.

Treatment of Anal Fissures

Many anal fissures heal on their own with self-care measures such as increasing fiber and fluid intake, avoiding straining during bowel movements, and soaking in warm water several times a day. If symptoms persist, medical treatment may be necessary. This can include topical creams to relieve pain, medications to relax the anal sphincter muscles, and, in some cases, surgery. A common surgical procedure for chronic anal fissures is lateral internal sphincterotomy, which

involves cutting a small portion of the anal sphincter muscle to reduce spasm and promote healing.

Living with Anal Fissures

Living with anal fissures can be challenging due to the discomfort and pain they can cause. However, most people can manage their symptoms and prevent recurrences with appropriate treatment and lifestyle modifications. Remember, if you're experiencing symptoms of an anal fissure, it's important to seek medical advice. Early diagnosis and treatment can help prevent complications and improve your quality of life.

Center For Digestive Health & Nutrition

725 Cherrington Parkway • Moon Township, PA 15108

412.262.1000

www.gihealth.com

IG: @thedigestivetract

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