



Anal Fissure

An anal fissure is a small tear in the lining of the anus. It may cause pain, bleeding, or even itching. It sometimes is hard to tell what causes a fissure. Sometimes the cause is hard, dry bowel movements that tear the lining, or diarrhea that leads to frequent bowel movements.

About 50% of the time fissures will heal themselves. Sometimes healing is aided by medicated creams, stool softeners, and/or sitz baths. A persistent fissure should be re-examined to see whether a definite reason exists for lack of healing. Fissures that continue to cause problems can be corrected by surgery. Surgical correction is done in an outpatient setting, which means no overnight hospital stay is required.

After surgery, there is minimal discomfort for a few days. This can be easily controlled with mild pain medications. Many people are able to return to work after only a day or two. Complete healing usually occurs in a few weeks, with pain often disappearing after 2-4 days.

More than 95% of patients who require surgical repair for this problem have no further trouble from fissure.

Anal Fissure Treatment Guidelines

Our providers will discuss fiber use with you. They recommend using Konsyl, Citrucel, or Metamucil nightly. You will also be prescribed Nifedipine, (*which is made at Bernie's Pharmacy*), and Lidocaine 5% ointment, (*which can be purchased at any pharmacy*). Sitz baths may be helpful. A sitz bath involves soaking the anal area in warm to hot water 10-15 minutes, 2-3 times a day. This conservative treatment usually lasts for 6-8 weeks. Most patients do well with conservative treatment. However, if you have not healed sufficiently in 6-8 weeks, a surgical consultation will be scheduled for you.

DIRECTIONS FOR FIBER

Konsyl:

Mix 1 teaspoon in a cup of juice, shake quickly, and drink rapidly,

Metamucil or Citrucel:

Mix 1 teaspoon in a cup of water, stir fast, and drink quickly.

DIRECTIONS FOR PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS

Nifedipine ointment:

Apply ½-1 inch of the ointment three times daily to the anal area. Ointment is for the outer anal area only. When applying the ointment, only a small portion of the tip of your finger should come into the anus itself.

Nifedipine is found at Bernie's Pharmacy.

Lidocaine 5 % ointment:

Apply 1 inch of the ointment 5-10 minutes before you have a bowel movement. It is okay to use this ointment up to 4 times daily.

This will help reduce the pain during the bowel movement.

If you wish to schedule a surgical consultation, or if your symptoms worsen, please call our office at (907) 222-1401.