



SPECIALIST SURGEONS

Practice No: 0509299

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PRURITUS ANI : THE EIGHT RULES

- (1) Keep the area clean by washing after every bowel action and night and morning. The nightly bath is particularly important if you itch at night. A bidet is ideal – sitting in the bath or a large bowl of water is a good substitute. Make sure that all the small particles of motion are removed from the skin crevices around the anus;
- (2) Avoid rubbing with a bar of soap or a rough flannel. Soap remaining in the skin crevices can be very irritating. A few suds in the water and on the fingertips or cottonwool are all that is needed;
- (3) If you are away from home or good toilet facilities when you have to pass a motion, use medicated wipes (e.g. wet wipes), which provide better gentler cleaning than hard paper;
- (4) Keep the area dry. Dab the skin dry gently with a towel or very soft paper. Do not rub. A hairdryer is the gentlest way of drying thoroughly;
- (5) Avoid excessive moisture. Never leave a wet dressing on the anal skin. Wear cotton underwear, **never nylon**. Avoid any firm foundation garment that presses the buttocks together. The free circulation of air will prevent moisture accumulating. A loose skirt is better than jeans. Avoid tights, use stockings or crotchless tights;
- (6) Avoid ointments and creams unless specifically prescribed by a specialist. Any greasy preparations tend to keep the skin soggy which is what we are trying to avoid. Many preparations are hyper-allergenic and should be avoided. Lotions may be prescribed in the acute stage of the condition and usually applied after cleaning.
- (7) Keep the bowels regular and smooth with plenty of roughage in the diet. Some dietary items cause irritation or loose motions in some people – avoid anything that does this to you. Do not sit and strain for many minutes when passing a motion – take more roughage if necessary;

- (8) As the condition improves, gradually reduce the strict regimen described here, but remember the principles of keeping the area **clean and dry** and avoid damage to the skin by rubbing or medication. If the condition recurs, as it may from time to time, start the routine once again until the irritation is under control.