Anal Fissure

An anal fissure often begins with sharp pain. This is usually following a bowel movement. It often causes bright red blood stained stools. It is the most common cause of rectal bleeding. One common cause of this is passage of a large, hard stool. It can also be caused by having frequent diarrheal stools. Anal fissures that occur for a longtime (*chronic*) may require surgery.

CAUSES

- Passing large, hard stools.
- Frequent diarrheal stools.
- Constipation.

SYMPTOMS

- Bright red, blood stained stools.
- Rectal bleeding.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- If constipation is the cause of the rectal fissure, it may be necessary to add a bulk-forming laxative. A diet high in fruits, whole grains, and vegetables will also help.
- Taking hot sitz baths for 1 half hour 4 times per day may help.
- Increase your fluid intake.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. Do not take aspirin as this may increase the tendency for bleeding.
- Do not use ointments containing anesthetic medications or hydrocortisone. They could slow healing.
- Avoid constipating foods such as bananas and cheese.
- In children, brown Karo syrup may be used by adding 1 teaspoon of syrup to 8 ounces of formula. An alternative is to give 3 teaspoons of mineral oil every day.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

Rectal bleeding continues, changes in intensity, or becomes more severe.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
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