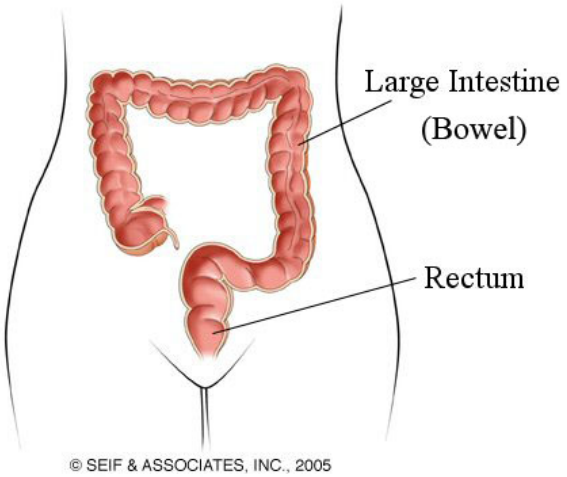
Proctalgia Fugax
(Rectal Pain)

Proctalgia fugax is a very short episode of intense rectal pain. It can last from seconds to minutes. It often occurs in the night, and awakens the person from sleep. It is not a sign of cancer.

CAUSES
The cause of this often intense rectal pain is not known. One possible cause may be spasm of the pelvic muscles or of the lowest part of the large intestine.



SYMPTOMS
The pain of proctalgia fugax:
- Is intensely severe.
- Lasts from only a few seconds to thirty minutes.
- Usually awakens the person from sleep.

DIAGNOSIS
In order to make sure that there are no other problems, diagnostic tests may be done such as:
- Anoscopy. This is a lighted scope that is put into the rectum to look for abnormalities.
- Barium enema. X-rays are taken after administering a radio-sensitive material.

TREATMENT
A number of things have been used to try to treat this condition, including:
- Medications.
- Warm baths.
- Relaxation techniques.
- Gentle massage of the painful area.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS
- Take all medications exactly as directed.
- Follow any prescribed diet.
- Follow instructions regarding both rest and physical activity.
- Learn progressive relaxation techniques.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:
- Your pain does not get better in the usual amount of time.
- You develop any new symptoms.

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