

## What Is Pruritus Ani?

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Anal itching or Pruritus Ani is irritation and/or at times inflammation (redness and swelling) of the anus. Itching can be made worse by scratching, forceful cleaning of the area or using too much topical (on the skin) treatments.

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### What causes Pruritus Ani?

There are many reasons why anal itching happens but often the most common cause is too much moisture in the anal area. Moisture can be caused by sweat or a small amount of left over stool around the anal area. Anal itching can be caused by other anal conditions such as hemorrhoids and anal fissures.

Anal itching could also be a reaction from certain foods or drinks, including:

- Coffee or Tea.
  - Carbonated beverages (like soda).
  - Milk or dairy products (such as cheese).
  - Tomatoes and tomato products such as Ketchup.
  - Chocolate.
  - Nuts.
  - Smoking.
  - Certain alcoholic beverages (especially beer and wine)
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### How can I fix it?

Actions that may be suggested include:

#### 1. AVOID MOISTURE

- Apply either small amounts of cotton, gauze, or some cornstarch powder to keep the area dry.
- Avoid all medicated, perfumed and deodorant powders.

#### 2. BULK STOOLS

- Take fiber supplements to prevent leakage or remaining stool on skin around the anus.

#### 3. AVOID FURTHER TRAUMA

- Do not use soap on the anal area.
- Do not scrub or rub the anal area.

- While cleaning area only rinse with warm water and pat dry. Use wet toilet paper, baby wipes or a wet washcloth.
- Do not scratch the itchy area. If the need to scratch becomes too much apply mittens or gloves.

**3. USE ONLY MEDICINES AS TOLD BY YOUR DOCTOR.**

- Apply only a small amount of the approved medicines on your skin.
- Avoid rubbing any medicines on the affected area.

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## How can I learn more?

You can also find information through the American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS) at <http://www.fascrs.org/patients/conditions/>

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## Do you have any questions or comments for your doctor?

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