

Instructions for Treatment of Pruritis Ani

Perianal itching (pruritis ani) is a common problem involving the perianal skin. Although we are often unable to determine the exact cause, we know that certain drugs (especially antibiotics), foods and beverages may be precipitating factors. Also soap products used to wash the perianal skin may increase the irritation and itching.

Eliminate the following items from your diet for the time being:

Carbonated beverages, coffee (including decaffeinated), tea, beer, milk, citrus juices, pepper/spicy foods, chocolate, and tomato products. Once your symptoms have resolved, you may introduce one item each week.

- Avoid soap and witch hazel to the perianal skin (you may use Dove, Cetophyl or Aveeno).
- After each bowel movement, cleanse the anal area with Balneol lotion and plain white toilet paper.
- A cotton ball may be placed between the buttocks, at the anal opening, to absorb moisture.
- Avoid synthetic underwear (use cotton) and jockey shorts.
- Remember, your itching will not abate quickly. Have patience. If symptoms do persist, please consult us.
- If you find yourself scratching at night, wear cotton gloves to bed. If you have difficulty sleeping or tend to awaken at night due to itching, you can use 25 to 50mg of Benadryl at bedtime – this may be helpful for a short basis.
- The goal is to keep your perianal skin clean, dry and slightly acidic without traumatizing the area. A softer and bulkier stool may be helpful. Drinking up to 8-10 glasses of water per day, in association with a diet rich in fruits and vegetables is appropriate. Additionally, a fiber supplement preparation once a day such as Metamucil or Benefiber may be helpful in maintaining consistency.