

ANAL HYGIENE

Anal Hygiene: Proper Cleaning & Wiping Technique

Avoid rubbing with toilet paper or moist towelettes. This aggravates the hemorrhoids and irritates the skin.

Clean the area in a bath or shower without soap to avoid irritation. Plain water or natural cleansing products are usually OK. Be sure to rinse the area well. Then gently dry the area by blotting it with a towel or using a blow dryer set to a light warm or cool setting.

Thick-quilted disposable **baby wipes** can be a suitable substitute for toilet paper when bathing is impractical. Be sure to wipe slowly and gently and never scrub the area.

Anal Hygiene: Proper Way to Experience a Bowel Movement

Use the toilet whenever you feel the urge to have a bowel movement, even if it is several times throughout the day. Try to go as soon as you feel the urge; if you delay for more than a few minutes, you might develop reflex constipation and lose the urge again for several hours.

Prolonged sitting or excessive straining while on the toilet allows the hemorrhoidal venous cushions to expand unnecessarily, causing hemorrhoid disease to develop or worsen. Avoid excessive straining with any bowel movement. Gentle pressure or straining of the abdominal and pelvic muscles is OK, but not for more than 30 consecutive seconds. Limit your time on the toilet to 3-5 minutes per sitting; if you have not completed an entire bowel movement, that's OK; get off the toilet, walk around for a bit, and wait for the urge to return. Don't read, watch TV, talk on the phone, or play video games while sitting on the toilet, or you might end up sitting there longer than a few minutes.

Anti-Itch Suggestions

For relief from itching caused by hemorrhoids, fissures, and or pruritus ani. Lower the acid pH balance of your stools by avoiding: 1) soda beverages, 2) citrus fruits and juices, and 3) beer and wine; and by taking 4) **Align®** probiotic supplements one to two times a day. Avoid caffeinated products, especially coffee, because caffeine lowers anal sphincter pressure, promotes flatulence, and generally heightens anal skin sensitivity.

If anal itching continues, bathe the area with a mild astringent, such as Domeboro's® solution or a dilute vinegar solution, before bedtime for 7-10 days.

If soiling with blood or other bodily fluids is a problem, blow-dry the area after bathing or blot it with a dry towel (no rubbing). Tear off a strip of cotton from a **cotton roll** and place it between the buttocks for maximum dryness.

☐ Over the counter: Baby wipes, Cotton-rolls, and Align® probiotics.