

## DR. E.A. PLEWES - HINTS FOR CONTROLLING PRURITUS ANI

Pruritus ani is itching around the anal area (where your bowels empty from).

Several factors may cause itching:

A common cause is too much cleaning of the area.

Moisture from too much sweating or too many bowel movements is another possible cause.

Other rare causes may include pinworms, eczema, psoriasis, dermatitis, hemorrhoids, anal fissures, infections and allergies.

DIET:

Avoid foods with caffeine - coffee, tea and cola drinks (Coca-cola, Pepsi, etc.).

When symptoms go away, you may be able to tolerate one cup of coffee or other caffeine beverage per day.

Avoid eating spicy foods and drinking alcoholic beverages - especially beer.

Occasionally some foods that may also be a problem are chocolate, tomatoes, nuts and popcorn.

CLEANSING:

Avoid further irritation to the affected area.

Use white toilet paper - not colored or perfumed tissue.

For cleaning, use wet toilet paper, baby wipes (non-alcohol, non-perfumed) or a soft washcloth to blot the area clean.

Pat the area dry. DO NOT RUB. If sensitive, a hair dryer on low can be used to blow dry the skin.

DO NOT SCRATCH the area or rub it - that will only make the problem worse.

KEEP THE AREA DRY:

Wear 100% cotton underwear.

Plain baby powder or cornstarch may be dusted lightly on the area.

A wisp of cotton (real cotton from a drugstore or cosmetic counter) or 4x4 inch gauze square can be placed right at the anal opening to help keep the area dry. Your doctor may suggest doing this every night or, if you must sit on a plastic seat for long periods of time in hot weather, such as a car or truck seat.

MEDICATIONS:

Use bulking agents such as Metamucil regularly, if prescribed by your doctor.

Generally, the use of creams and ointments may cause more problems so do not use them unless prescribed by your doctor.

If you are using any medications at all, your doctor or nurse should be told the names of them as this can be important in solving your problem.