

SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGING THE ITCHING ANOGENITAL AREA:

The basic aim of treatment is to keep the skin of the anal area clean and dry and to avoid injury to the skin from excessive wiping or abrasion.

You may want to wear cotton gloves during the night to prevent yourself from scratching.

When showering or bathing, avoid the use of perfumed soap. Especially avoid rubbing the bar of soap on the area or rubbing the itching area with a washcloth. Soap is highly alkaline and the residues collected in the folds of the skin cause irritation and alter the normal acidity of the skin. Avoiding soap completely is preferable.

After bowel movements, wash the anal area with water and use wet cotton or baby wipes. Tux or Prax wipes are also okay. Do not leave a wet dressing against the anal skin for any protracted time. Pat the area dry with non-scented toilet tissue, and avoid rubbing with the toilet tissue.

If your itching is worse following bowel movements or if there is "after drainage", do a rectal irrigation using a 3 or 4 ounce bulb syringe and warm water.

During the day, wear a thin cotton strip drawn off the side of a roll of absorbent cotton (Red Cross Cotton, Johnson & Johnson). The cotton strip should be thin enough so that you are not conscious of its presence. *Do not use a cotton ball.* You may dust the absorbent cotton with cornstarch or baby powder. Change the cotton strip frequently. It is important to apply the cotton strip directly to the anus. A sanitary napkin is not a substitute. Wear cotton underwear.

Take a tub or sitz bath morning and/or night in lukewarm water.

Following the cleaning and drying routine, apply any prescribed creams as directed by your physician

Items in the diet that produce gas, indigestion or loose bowel movements should be avoided. Foods associated with irritation of the bowel, producing mucus or aggravating drainage, including tomatoes (including ketchup), citrus fruits and juices, coffee and tea (including "decaf") in excess of 2 cups per day, beer and other alcoholic beverages, colas, nuts and popcorn, milk, chocolate and spices, especially pepper should also be avoided.

This management program may be reduced or adjusted depending upon the control of your symptoms. Item #6, the cotton strip, should be the last measure abandoned and the first measure to be resumed in control of your problem.

Recurrences are common and to be expected. Call or plan to return to the doctor if you are unable to control your itching or if the situation worsens in spite of these measures.