

ANAL HYGIENE

Anal Hygiene: Proper Cleaning & Wiping Technique

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

Whenever possible, clean the area in a bath or a shower without using soap (soap is an irritant). 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 use a blow dryer set to light warm or cool.

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 to go; if you delay this urge by more than a few minutes, you might get a reflex constipation and lose the urge to go 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. A 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 from 3-5 minutes for any one 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 have a bowel movement return. Don't read, watch TV, talk on the phone, or play video games while sitting on the toilet, or else you might extend your time sitting on the toilet by more than a few minutes.

Anti-Itch Suggestions

For relief from itching caused by hemorrhoids 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 three to four 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 like **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-roll, and Align® probiotics.