



ANAL FISSURES FACT SHEET

What are Anal Fissures?

An anal fissure is a small sore spot located 1/2 inch inside the anal opening. The symptoms of an anal fissure are pain and/or bleeding during and after bowel movements. The pain can be severe and the amount of bleeding is variable. Anal fissures are also often referred to as anal ulcers.

What causes Anal Fissures?

The most common cause of an anal fissure is the passage of a large hard stool which tears the lining of the anal canal just inside the anal opening. Diarrhea is a less common cause of an anal fissure.

How are Anal Fissures treated?

Your physician may recommend a high fiber diet and fiber supplements for an anal fissure, as well as anal creams or ointments. If the anal fissure has been present for several months or more, your physician may recommend a minor outpatient surgical procedure for the anal fissure. If surgery is recommended, your physician will discuss this with you in detail prior to the planned procedure.

Can they lead to more serious problems?

Anal fissures do not lead to more serious problems like cancer. However, it is important to note that all rectal bleeding should be evaluated by your physician. Rectal bleeding is one of the more advanced signs of colorectal cancer and polyps. Your physician may recommend further studies to assess the rectal bleeding, even if you have a known anal fissure.