

Pruritis Ani

Pruritis ani , or anal itching is one of the most common complaints related to anal pathology. Itching tends to occur in and just around the anus. It is frequently more pronounced at night.

Itching can be associated with benign conditions like symptomatic hemorrhoids, anal fissures, anal fistulae and contact dermatitis. Malignant skin conditions (Paget's Disease and Bowen's Disease) can also present with itching as the primary symptom.

Most commonly, pruritis ani is caused by foods that are eaten, vitamins, minerals and medications that are consumed and creams, lotions, solutions and soaps that are applied.

Everything that is ingested is converted into basic chemicals by the intestinal tract. Those chemicals appear in all body secretions, including the mucus that is in the rectum. When the mucus comes into contact with the skin around the anus the chemicals can irritate the skin. Such irritation is frequently perceived as itching. Of course, the natural reaction to itching is scratching. Scratching compounds the problem by removing the lining of skin that prevents itching. If the irritated inflamed skin is washed with soap (especially those that contain perfume or deodorant) the problem is compounded.

People with pruritis ani should have a complete evaluation to exclude serious anal or rectal disease that may require medical or surgical treatment. Itching can then be treated by dietary restrictions and topical creams.