Patient Advice Sheet for Pruritus Ani

What is pruritus ani?

Pruritus Ani is an intense itching around the back passage (anus). It is often caused by the slight leakage of mucous from the anus which irritates the sensitive skin around the area. It can take months of care to improve the symptoms.

How can it be controlled?

The following list may help:

- Avoid scratching: pinching skin from outside the underwear will relieve the desire to scratch.
- Avoid creams and ointments unless prescribed in hospital. Prolonged use can damage skin leading to worsening of symptoms and can encourage fungal infection.
- Many creams contain local anaesthetics. These frequently cause allergy and are best avoided altogether.
- Use soft strong toilet paper: The paper should be soft to minimise abrasion but not so soft as to disintegrate leaving particles of paper behind.
- Avoid excessive cleaning after going to the toilet.
- Gentle wiping followed by cleaning with a moistened cotton ball is ideal (or use bidet).
- After going to the toilet place half a cotton ball into the anus to help prevent mucus leakage.
- Do not use soap or antiseptics around the anus.
- Dry well after washing but do not rub – pat dry (or use hair dryer).
- Avoid synthetic underwear especially in hot weather. Loose cotton is best. Change underwear frequently.
- If there is moisture use cornstarch, not talc as this is abrasive.
- Take care with your diet. Avoid excessive coffee, chocolate, alcohol, citrus fruit, high fibre foods and hot spicy foods.
- You may be given medications to form the motions especially if you are loose and frequent. Excessive constipation should be avoided, a regular daily complete action being the aim.

Further advice may be obtained from your Doctor or Colorectal Nurse:

| Queen Elizabeth Hospital: telephone: 0191 4820000 then ask for either: |
| Colorectal Nurse Specialist bleep: 2041 or |
| Colorectal Support Nurse  bleep: 3098 |
| Colorectal Office Direct Line: 0191 4453153 |
Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us improve the services available your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.

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Author: Melanie Leighton/Colorectal Team

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