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Anal Fissure

What is an anal fissure?

An anal fissure is a small tear in the lining of the anus. It may cause pain, bleeding and anal spasms

What causes an anal fissure?

A hard, dry bowel movement (constipation) may cause a tear in the anal lining, resulting in a fissure. Other causes of a fissure include diarrhea, inflammation of the anorectal area.

Will a fissure heal by itself?

About 50% of fissures heal, either by themselves or with the use of a medicated cream. Stool softeners and Sitz baths (soaking the anal area in plain warm water for 15-20 minutes) may also be helpful.

What can be done if a fissure doesn't heal?

A chronic fissure should be re-examined to see whether a reason exists for a lack of healing. Such reason may include scarring, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease. Those which continue to cause pain and/or bleeding can be corrected by an outpatient surgical procedure.

What does surgery involve?

Partial lateral internal sphincterotomy is a procedure which cuts a portion of the internal anal sphincter muscle. This does not usually interfere with the ability to control bowel movements.

When would I be able to return to work after surgery?

There is some discomfort for a few days. This is usually controlled with mild pain medicines. Many people only miss 1-2 days of work.

How long does the healing process take after surgery?

Complete healing usually occurs in a few weeks, though the pain commonly improves after several days.

Will the problem come back again?

More than 95% who require surgery for this problem have no further trouble from fissures. If it heals without surgery then there you are at an increased risk of developing fissures in the future. Therefore it is important that you avoid constipation.