

Your Journey with Perianal Disease



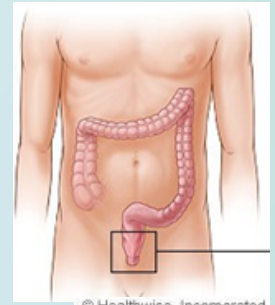
For more information scan this QR code or go to myhealth.alberta.ca/perianal-disease-pathway

Perianal disease includes hemorrhoids and anal fissures. You are the most important part of your healthcare team. This guide will help you to know what to expect as you work with your team. If you have any questions along the way, please ask your healthcare team.

Before your appointment

- Write down how you feel, your symptoms, and any questions or concerns.
- You may see blood in the toilet after a bowel movement, and you may have itching or pain in your perianal area. Never assume blood is from hemorrhoids, always seek medical attention for blood in your bowel movements.

The lowest portion of your bowels is the **rectum**. The **anus** is at the end of the rectum and is the part that stool passes through. The anus and the area around it is called the **perianal region**.



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Visit your healthcare provider

- In order to better manage your health condition, your healthcare provider needs to hear from you and understand what matters to you.
- Share all your symptoms and concerns. Your health includes physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and social elements.
- Your healthcare provider may need to look at and feel around your perianal region.
- Consider bringing a family member or friend to support you.

Get your assessment & tests

- Your healthcare provider may do a digital rectal exam (DRE). This involves inserting their gloved and lubricated finger into your rectum to feel for anything abnormal.
- Lab investigations are uncommon but may be used to rule out other conditions in the early stages.

Review your assessment & test results

- Your healthcare provider will discuss the result of the digital rectal exam and next steps with you right away.
- If you are sent for tests, talk with your healthcare provider so you know what your test results mean.

Review your treatment & prevention options

- You may need to change what you eat and drink, your activity levels, and your bathroom habits. This may help with current perianal problems and may help prevent future problems.
- Your healthcare provider may suggest creams, ointments, or pills that you can get at a drug store.

Talk with your healthcare provider about a referral

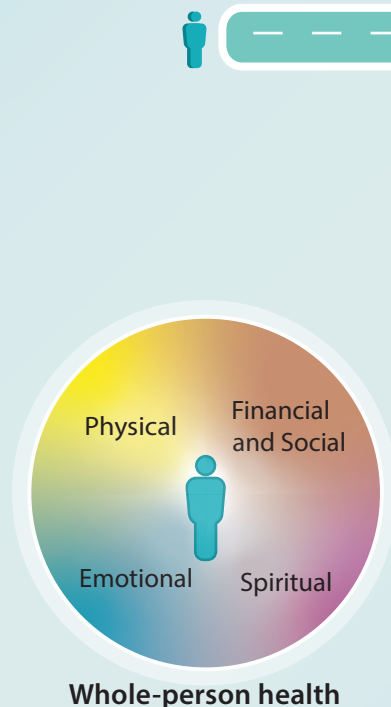
- Most patients will not need to see a specialist (general surgeon).
- The need to see a specialist is based on how long you've had the perianal problem, what you have tried to relieve your symptoms, what your healthcare provider sees and feels during your exam, and what may be causing perianal problems to occur.

Start your treatment & watch your symptoms

- If you have a fever, smelly discharge, or frequent liquid bowel movements (diarrhea), make sure to tell your healthcare team.
- Take an active role in your care. Write down what you feel, what you notice, and what you were doing when you notice problems.

Keep taking care of yourself

- Keep taking care of your overall health.
- Look for other healthy lifestyle resources and supports.



Important Tips:

Need a family doctor?

ahs.ca/findadoctor

Need a translator?

Let your healthcare provider know

Need health advice?

Call Health Link at 811

Need to find programs and services in your community?

Call 211 or visit ab.211.ca