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Colon & Rectal Surgery

## Treating Anal Fissures

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Here are four ways you can treat anal fissures (note the order):

1. An important part of treating anal fissures is correcting the hard stool that caused your fissure. The first thing to do is increase the amount of fiber in your diet: Eat more fresh fruit, vegetables and whole grain breads. Daily fiber supplements such as Metamucil, Konsyl, Benefiber, etc., are good to take as well.

As an alternative to fiber supplements, eat a bowl of high-fiber cereal for breakfast each day, such as Raisin Bran, All Bran or Bran Flakes. Check the side panel of the cereal box for nutrition information. Under the dietary fiber heading, look to make sure your cereal has at least 7 grams of fiber (7g) per serving. If it does not, choose another cereal.

2. Drink lots of water. Water is the best stool softener around, but most people don't consume enough water. Drink a large glass of water with each meal and/or between each meal.

3. Fill your bathtub with 8 inches of hot water—as hot as you can take it. Soak in the tub for 10-15 minutes twice a day. Doing so relaxes the spasmodic anal muscle causing your pain. Reducing the spasm will help your body heal the fissure. Although a time-consuming step, hot baths are well worth it. Not only do they help heal the fissure, but they also make you feel better when your bottom hurts.

4. Apply diltiazem ointment as directed. Smear a pea-sized amount of ointment where your anus puckers together; then, apply some of it just inside your anus—but no farther than the first knuckle of your index finger. Repeat this step after each tub soak or at least twice a day.

By following these directions, you have a good chance of healing your fissure without the need for surgery.

*Excerpted with permission from the American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons*