

HOW TO WIPE

Many anal problems stem from inappropriate cleaning of the anus during bathing and after bowel movements (BM). This can, over time, lead to itching, pain, bleeding, soiling, and, ultimately, broken and infected skin. Over the years the following advice has proven effective for the vast majority of patients.

1. Do NOT apply soap to the anal area while bathing. No washcloth either. Finger tips and water should be adequate. If you must use “soap”, Aveno (oatmeal) bar is OK. A good alternative is to use hair conditioner as a solvent. It is correct pH and usually soothing.
2. After BMs the first piece of toilet tissue should have a quarter-sized dollop of hand lotion plus a little water. It is suggested to keep a pump bottle of lotion next to the toilet. If you can't reach a water source, have a spray bottle of water, also. After wiping with that, complete the job with damp toilet tissue. You may use more lotion if desired. This lubricates and moisturizes. (Wet wipes do both.)
3. If you have a BM outside the home, keep a travel size tube of lotion in your purse, desk, glove box, etc. Wet paper towels plus lotion work nicely and usually will flush in commercial toilets.
4. If medicated cream is prescribed, use as directed.
5. Keeping the anal area dry is helpful. Body or foot powder and a blow dryer are good to use after a shower. Loose fitting cotton underwear is preferable to allow some air flow.
6. Fungus is a rare cause of this condition, but a frequent opportunistic invader. You may be prescribed a topical or oral antifungal.