

Anal tags

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A patient's guide



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What are anal tags?

Anal tags are small flaps of skin at the edge of the anus. They often develop after someone has had pain or bleeding from piles. They are common in adults, especially in women who have given birth. Anal tags are harmless but occasionally cause itching.

They can make it more difficult to maintain good hygiene after passing a motion.

How are anal tags diagnosed?

Anal tags are common and can usually be diagnosed by your general practitioner examining your bottom. If there is doubt they may arrange for you to see a specialist to confirm the diagnosis.

How can anal tags be treated?

Anal tags usually cause few problems. It is a good idea to avoid constipation by eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and drinking plenty of water.

This is because constipation may lead to problems with piles that can occur at the same time as anal tags (see piles leaflet).

For some people anal tags are helped by washing after passing a motion, or by using wet wipes instead of dry toilet paper. For others simple piles ointments, available over the counter at the chemist, may help.

If your doctor or specialist thinks your anal tags may be linked to some other condition such as wart infection, they may advise specific treatment for this or suggest removing the tags to check them in the laboratory.

Removal of anal tags can usually be done under local anaesthetic. After the operation it is important to have frequent warm baths or showers during healing to help keep the area clean.