

# ADVANCED GASTROENTEROLOGY OF BERGEN COUNTY, P.A.

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Gastroenterology  
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## PRURITUS ANI

*Pruritus ani* (anal itch) is a common condition involving the skin around the anus.

Although we are often unable to determine the exact cause, we know that certain drugs (especially antibiotics), and certain beverages (especially coffee) may be precipitating factors. Also, soap products used to wash the skin around the anus may increase the irritation and itching.

The following beverages should be completely eliminated from your diet: coffee (including decaffeinated coffee), beer, wine, bourbon, gin, scotch, cola beverages (Coke, Pepsi, etc.). Also avoid tomatoes, spices, and chocolate.

No soap should be applied to the perianal skin at all. (Use **Balneol** lotion to clean this area.) Use the prescribed ointment on the irritated area as directed. A thin layer of ointment should be gently rubbed into the irritated skin (do not attempt to apply the ointment up into the anal canal).

Starting in the seventh week, reintroduce one beverage at a time into your diet, and add one at a time each following week. If the itching recurs with one of these beverages, it may be necessary to eliminate it permanently to control the problem. Coffee is often the worst offender.

Anal Hygiene - Wiping habits are very individualized. Most people use paper and tend to rub vigorously. Wipe with moistened white paper, or absorbent cotton can be used. We prefer **Balneol** because of its convenience and its soothing effect. Place some on the paper and gently wipe or pat the anus. Then gently wipe the anus until dry. Avoid soap. Do not rub with a towel after bathing. Cotton may be used between the buttocks, especially if one perspires. Avoid extremes of hot or cold.

Avoid synthetic underwear, especially if the anal area is moist. Most underwear is 30 to 100% synthetic. Use cotton only. Avoid jockey shorts. Tension and stress may aggravate your symptoms. You may need a mild tranquilizer to control these symptoms.

Remember, your itching will not stop abruptly. You must have patience. If symptoms do persist, please consult with us again.