

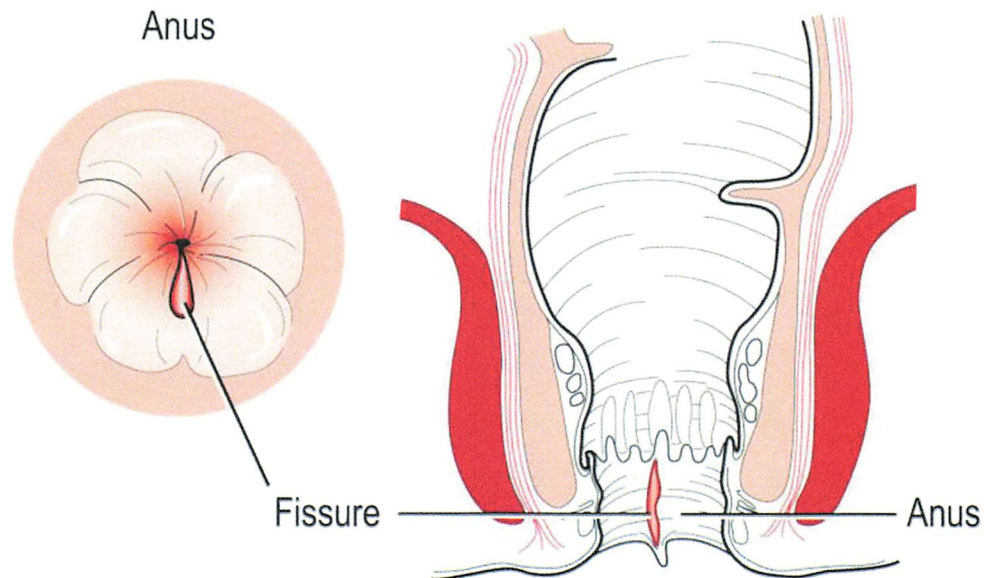


3400 Independence Drive
Homewood, AL 32209
Office: 205-933-1199
Fax: 205-212-5585

Brian Guffin, MD, FACS, FASCRS
Timothy B. Murray, MD, FACS, FASCRS
Steven Scarcliff, MD, FACS, FASCRS
Rachel Sabo, MD, FACS

Anal Fissure

An anal fissure is a crack in the lining of the anal canal (the skin that surrounds the anus). This can occur at any age, but usually occurs in young adults. Fissures may be caused by constipation and passage of a hard stool, or diarrhea and passage of frequent stools. However, the majority seem to develop without any particular cause. The symptoms of a fissure are pain, especially when passing a bowel motion, and some bleeding. Occasionally, people experience discharge of an abscess in association with a fissure.



How can a fissure be treated?

Approximately 50% of fissures heal either by themselves or with non-operative treatment, including application of special medicated cream, use of stool softeners and avoidance of constipation. Some fissures, if they do not respond to these methods, may require an operation.

Conservative treatment

Commonly an ointment is used (I will write a specialty compounded medication for you). More important than the ointment is to keep your stool very soft and not at all constipated. (The consistency should be that of a mushy banana.)

What does surgery involve?

The most common operation for this condition is lateral internal sphincterotomy. This involves cutting a portion of one of the anal muscles and helps the fissure to heal by preventing pain and spasm, and which improves the blood supply to the skin. Cutting this muscle rarely interferes with the ability to control bowel movements and can be performed without an overnight hospital stay. Other operations, less frequently performed, include anoplasty.