

Rectal Abscess

Call the doctor NOW if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever or shaking chills.
- Severe pain.
- Dizziness.
- Consistent vomiting.
- Swelling or drainage of pus from the anal area.
- A very painful bowel movement (poop) or is unable to have a bowel movement.

Call your child's regular doctor if:

- You think your child has a rectal abscess (a pocket of pus around the anus or rectal area).
- Your child has a rectal abscess that keeps coming back even after treatment.

A rectal abscess is a collection of pus in the anal area under the skin.

This can happen at any age. It is caused when germs get into the tissue of a small gland inside the anus and cause an infection. It can happen to infants or toddlers that are still in diapers who have a problem with small tears in the skin around the anus (anal fissures). For these children, germs from the stool (poop) can get into the tears in the skin and cause an infection.

Symptoms of a rectal abscess include:

- painful, hardened red area around the anus
- pus coming from the rectum
- fever
- pain with bowel movement
- constipation

Treatment may involve antibiotics and draining of the abscess.

If the abscess is not treated, there may be complications. Sometimes an abscess comes back even after the area looks healed. This is because there is a fistula still under the skin. This means that the skin may have healed over the top of an opening in the tissue. If the abscess comes back, your child will need to be seen by his or her primary doctor or in the Pediatric General Surgery Clinic for further treatment. Depending on your child's condition, he or she may also need to be seen by a GI (stomach and intestine) doctor.

Rectal Abscess

What You Can Do to Help Your Child

- Your child may use acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]) for pain unless a different medicine was prescribed by the doctor. If your child is over 6 months old then you may use ibuprofen (Motrin[®] or Advil[®]) instead of Tylenol[®]. Never give your child aspirin.
- Encourage your child to sit in warm water about 3 or 4 times a day.
- You can use a syringe to squirt water on the abscess to clean it each time your child has a bowel movement.
- Your child's medical provider may talk to you about stool softeners.
- Your child may need to wear a small dressing or a mini-pad if there is drainage.
- If the wound has a band-aid covering, change the band-aid daily with bathing. If the wound has a different dressing on it, change it as instructed.

For General Health Information and Resources:

Call or visit the [Family Resource Center](#), a health information library on the 3rd floor of the hospital. Call 314.454.2350, email at frc@bjc.org, or check out the FREE [St. Louis Children's Hospital Kid Care App](#).

