

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR MANAGING PERIANAL ITCHING**

- The basic aim of treatment is to keep the anal area clean, dry, and to avoid injury to the skin from excessive wiping or abrasion.
- When showering or bathing, avoid the use of perfumed soap. Especially avoid rubbing the anal area with the bar of soap or washcloth. Soap is highly alkaline and the residues collect in the folds of the skin causing irritation and altering the normal acidity of the skin. Avoiding soap completely is preferable.
- After bowel movements, wash the anal area with warm water or use wet cotton or tucks to cleanse. Do not leave wet dressing against the anal skin for any protracted time. Pat the area dry with a non-scented toilet tissue and avoid rubbing with toilet tissue.
- During the day, wear a thin piece of cotton taken off a roll of 100% absorbent cotton (Red Cross or Johnson & Johnson cotton). The cotton strip should be thin enough so that you're not conscious of its presence. **Do not** use rayon cotton balls or cosmetic puffs. Change the cotton strip frequently. It is important to apply the cotton directly to the anal skin. A sanitary napkin is not a good substitute, as it doesn't get close enough to the anal opening.
- Wear cotton underwear.
- Take a tub or sitz bath in the morning and/or evening in lukewarm water. A tablespoon of bleach should be added to the tub bath as well.
- Items in the diet that produce gas, indigestion, or loose stools should be avoided. Foods that may irritate the bowel causing mucus or aggravating drainage, include: tomatoes, ketchup, citrus fruits, and juices, coffee, and tea (including "decaf" in excess of two cups per day), beer and alcoholic beverages, colas, nuts, popcorn, milk chocolate, and spices (especially peppers).
- Follow your cleaning and drying routine, apply only prescribed creams or medications as directed by your physician. One such medication is Desitin Ointment (usually found in the baby supply area of your drugstore).
- This management program may be reduced or adjusted depending upon the control of your symptoms. Recurrences are common and to be expected. Call the office if you are unable to control your itching or the situation worsens in spite of these measures.

