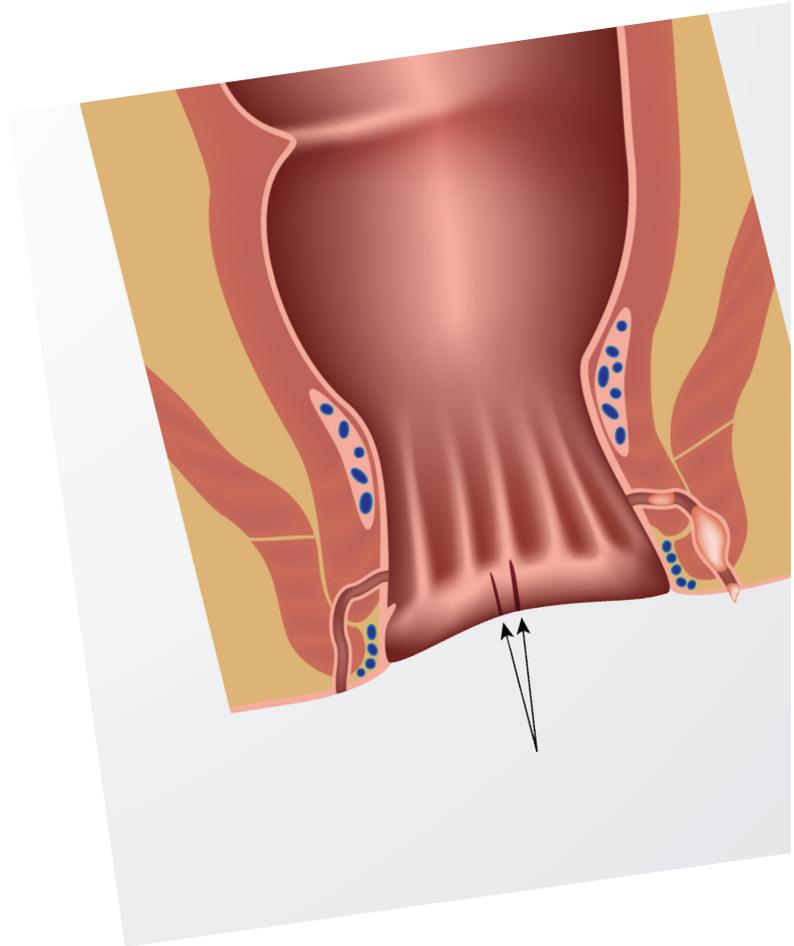


Anal Fissure



The Department of Surgery sees patients for a wide range of surgical services. These include Colorectal, Endocrine, Breast, Upper GI, Bariatrics, Hepatobiliary, Plastics, Neurosurgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery. Our highly qualified consultants use minimally-invasive surgery and surgical endoscopy for diagnostic and therapeutic interventions in the treatment of these conditions. We provide inpatient and outpatient care with a 24-hour acute surgical service. Day surgery (endoscopy) and minor surgery (lumps and bumps) are also offered at Jurong Medical Centre.

What is an anal fissure?

An anal fissure is a small, oval-shaped tear in the skin that lines the opening of the anus. It is common and often the cause of severe pain and bleeding when you move your bowels.

What are its symptoms?

- Severe pain during and after a bowel movement lasting from several minutes to a few hours
- Blood that is bright red in colour spotted on the toilet paper or stool

What is it caused by?

• Certain anal infections or tumours (uncommon)	• Loose stools and diarrhoea
• Hard or dry bowel movement	• Tight anal sphincter muscles
• Inflammatory conditions (uncommon)	• Trauma to the inner lining of the anus

After a bowel movement, severe pain may cause the anal sphincter muscle to experience a spasm. This reduces blood flow to the injury site and affects healing to cause the next bowel movement to be more painful. Treatment aims to break this cycle, relax the anal sphincter muscle and help fissures to heal.

Anal fissures can be acute (recent) or chronic (present for a long time).

Chronic fissures may be more difficult to treat and an external lump associated with the tear may have formed. This is known as a sentinel pile or skin tag. Extra tissues inside the anal canal may make it difficult for fissures to heal.

What are my treatment options?

Most cases of anal fissures do not require surgery and treatment can include a high-fibre diet or supplements to achieve bulky stools. Fibre supplements should not exceed 25 - 35 grams of fibre/day. Use stool softeners and drink plenty of water to keep stools soft. Warm tub baths (sitz baths) for 10 - 20 minutes for a few times a day can soothe and relax anal muscles to help it heal. Medications are sometimes prescribed.

Chronic fissures may be harder to treat and require surgery.



Will anal fissures return?

It is quite common for healed fissures to return after a hard bowel movement. Practice good bowel habits and eat plenty of high-fibre food to prevent it from returning. If they persist, your doctor can conduct further assessments to determine its cause(s).



What should I do if it does not heal?

People with the following conditions may experience longer healing time:

- Bowel movements that are persistently hard or loose
- Scarring
- Spasm of the internal anal muscle

Other less common medical problems:

- Anal tumours
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Infections
- Tuberculosis

A colonoscopy can help to investigate and rule out these conditions.

Surgery is recommended for people with chronic anal fissure and those who have been on medical therapy for one to three months, but have not recovered.

What happens at surgery?

Surgery involves dividing part of the internal anal sphincter to relax the anal sphincter, reduce pain and spasm, and allow fissures to heal. It is usually an outpatient procedure.

All surgical procedures come with some form of risk, but a sphincterotomy is 90% successful and rarely interferes with one's ability to control gas and stools after surgery. Your surgeon will discuss with you the risks and help you make the best treatment option.

How long will it take to recover?

Complete healing may take up to six to 10 weeks. The acute pain you feel at first will subside after a few days. Many patients can return to work and normal activities after a few days.

Can anal fissure lead to colon cancer?

No. However, persistent symptoms will first need to be evaluated to rule out colon cancer. Your surgeon may conduct further tests to confirm this. A colonoscopy may also be performed to rule out other causes associated with rectal bleeding.

For more information

Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital

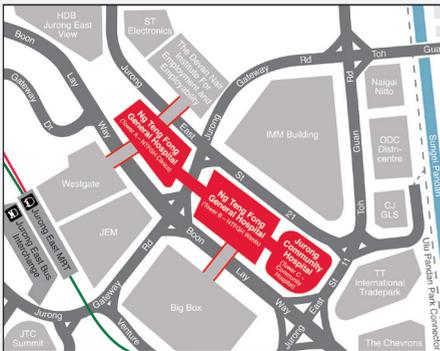
1 Jurong East St 21,
Singapore 609606
General enquiries: 6716 2000 Fax: 6716 5500
www.juronghealth.com.sg

Clinical and appointment line hours (closed on Sundays and public holidays)

For appointments, please call 6716 2222
Monday - Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm,
Saturday 8.00am - 12.30pm

For dental appointments, please call 6716 2233
Monday - Thursday 8.00am - 5.30pm
Friday 8.00am - 5.00pm

Getting there



By train

Jurong East MRT Station

By bus

From Jurong East Bus Interchange

SBS 51, 52, 66, 78, 79, 97, 97e, 98,
98M, 105, 143, 143M, 160, 183, 197,
333, 334, 335, 506

Along Boon Lay Way

SBS 99, Private bus service 625

Jurong Medical Centre

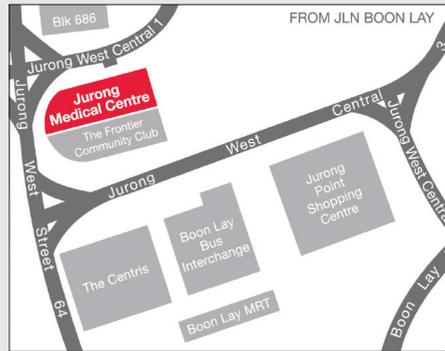
60 Jurong West Central 3,
Singapore 648346
General enquiries: 6716 2000 Fax: 6551 7999
www.jmc.com.sg

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Getting there



By train

Boon Lay MRT Station

By bus

SBS 30, 79, 154, 157, 174, 179, 181,
182, 192, 193, 194, 198, 199, 240, 241,
242, 243 W/G, 246, 249, 251, 252, 254,
255, 257, 405
SMRT 172, 178, 180, 187

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The information in this brochure is meant for educational purposes and should not be used as substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek your doctor's advice before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition.