

1 **BNFC - Anal fissure**

2 ***Description of condition or physiological state***

3

4 An anal fissure is a tear or ulcer in the lining of the anal canal, immediately within the anal
5 margin. Clinical features of anal fissure include bleeding and persistent pain on defecation,
6 and a linear split in the anal mucosa. Constipation (passage of hard stools) is the most
7 common cause in children. The majority of anal fissures are posterior, and an underlying
8 cause should be considered (secondary anal fissure) if fissures are multiple, occur laterally,
9 and are refractory to treatment.

10 Suspect sexual abuse if a child has an anal fissure, and constipation, Crohn's disease or
11 passing hard stools have been excluded as the cause (see also *Useful resources* below). [A]

12

13 ***Aims of treatment***

14

15 The aim of treatment is to relieve pain and promote healing of the fissure.

16

17 ***Treatment***

18

19 Initial management of acute anal fissures should focus on ensuring that stools are soft and
20 easily passed. Osmotic laxatives, such as **lactulose** or **macrogols** (macrogol 3350 with
21 potassium chloride, sodium bicarbonate and sodium chloride), are recommended. A simple
22 analgesic (such as paracetamol or ibuprofen), may be offered for prolonged burning pain
23 following defecation. Children should be referred to a paediatric specialist if the anal fissure
24 has not healed following two weeks of initial management, or earlier if there is significant
25 pain. [A]

26

27 ***Useful resources***

28

29 Child maltreatment: when to suspect maltreatment in under 18s. National Institute for
30 Health and Care Excellence. Clinical guideline 89. July 2009.

31 www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng20

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BNF Publications Evidence Grading system

Grades of recommendation

Grade	Strength	Evidence type
[A]	High	NICE-accredited guidelines Non-accredited guidelines that pass AGREE II assessment At least one meta-analysis, systematic review, or RCT rated as 1++, and directly applicable to the target population; <i>or</i> A body of evidence consisting principally of studies rated as 1+, directly applicable to the target population, and demonstrating overall consistency of results

Levels of Evidence

Level	Type of study
1++	High quality meta-analyses, systematic reviews of RCTs, or RCTs with a very low risk of bias
1+	Well-conducted meta-analyses, systematic reviews, or RCTs with a low risk of bias

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