

Fissure Surgery

What are fissures?

Fissures are painful breaks or tears in the skin or lining of the anal canal that can be incredibly uncomfortable. Most patients experience pain on passing a bowel motion which can persist through the day. The pain is due to spasm of the anal sphincter complex and can be quite debilitating. Anal fissures are a common problem and affect people of all ages.

How are they treated?

Treatment involves avoiding constipation and protecting the skin near the anal canal by using wet wipes and applying emollients or protective creams.

Some topical ointments can help. Rectogesic is a brand of ointment which helps by relaxing the sphincter spasm. Diltiazem is another ointment which can be prescribed as an alternative which is often better tolerated but is made specially through a compounding pharmacy. Dr Urquhart can discuss all these options with you.

In cases in which there is a persistent or troublesome fissure, an injection of Botox can help. This is a fairly quick day surgery procedure completed under a light general anaesthetic. During the procedure an injection of Botox is administered to relax the sphincter spasm relieving the pain and allowing the underlying fissure to heal. There are other surgical options also available for complex fissures such as a sphincterotomy, but often a simple injection of Botox is effective.

Tips on preventing recurrences:

- Increase the amount of fibre in your diet. Consuming around 30g of fibre per day can assist in softening the stool and improving fissure healing.
- Increase your fluid intake. Drinking the recommended amount of water daily helps to prevent constipation.
- Avoid straining during bowel movements. Straining increases pressure which can cause new tears or reopen a healing one.