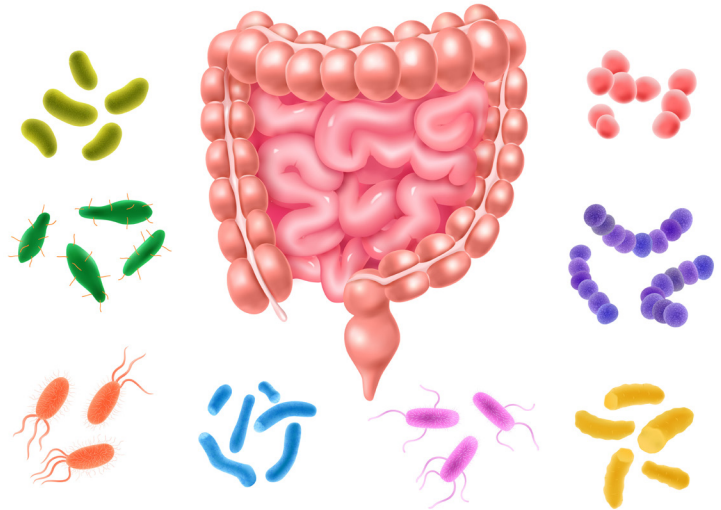


Learn about **infectious Proctitis**

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1. What is infectious proctitis and how does it manifest?

Infectious proctitis is the inflammation of the rectum, which is the organ through which fecal matter (stool) is expelled. It manifests as pain or difficulty during bowel movements (defecation). Sometimes, after wiping the anus, the toilet paper may be stained with blood or pus.

2. What causes infectious proctitis?

It is caused by several microorganisms. The most common are: *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (gonococcus) (see Health Letter 38), *Chlamydia trachomatis* (see Health Letter 80), *Trichomonas vaginalis* (see Health Letter 58), *Mycoplasma genitalium* (see Health Letter 85), and *Treponema pallidum* (see Health Letter 8), the bacterium that causes syphilis, and viruses such as Herpes simplex type 1 or 2 (see Health Letter 29).

3. Who can get infectious proctitis and how is it transmitted?

Infectious proctitis can affect anyone, male or female, regardless of age. It is acquired or transmitted during anal sexual intercourse with an individual who is infected with any of the microorganisms mentioned in the answer to question 2.

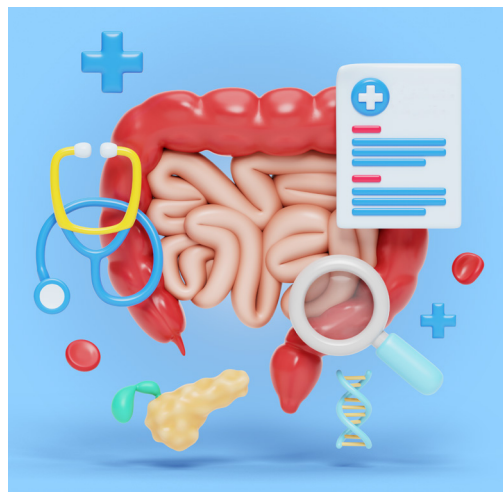
4. When should you seek medical attention?

You should see your doctor if you experience the symptoms described in question 1 or if you have had sexual contact with someone diagnosed with proctitis, even if you have no symptoms.



5. How is infectious proctitis diagnosed?

Although the diagnosis is made with laboratory tests, it is the treating physician who, after a detailed medical history, decides which tests to order.



Several tests may be used, such as cultures or the detection of bacterial components (antigens), and more recently, molecular tests that detect the presence of genetic material and even have the ability to detect multiple microorganisms in a single test.

It is very important to follow these recommendations when preparing for the laboratory test:

- 1** Properly clean the anal area. An internal wash is recommended after bowel movement (pooping), before going to the laboratory.

- 2** Do not be taking antibiotics or have taken them in the last 8 days.

6. How is infectious proctitis treated?

Treatment is based on laboratory test results. If the cause is bacterial, it should be treated with specific antibiotics prescribed by the treating physician. Each microorganism is treated differently (see question 2).

Note: Please do not take any medication unless it is prescribed by a doctor.

7. How can infectious proctitis be prevented?

The most effective prevention is monogamy, that is, sharing your sexual life with only one partner. If this is not the case, a condom should always be used, which is what we refer to as safe sex.

Recommended Reading

- Health Letter 8: Learn About Syphilis
- Health Letter 38: Learn About Gonorrhea
- Health Letter 58: Learn About Trichomonas
- Health Letter 80: Learn About Chlamydia
- Health Letter 85: Learn About *Mycoplasma genitalium*
- Health Letter 90: Learn About Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Estrada S, Escandón K, Gaviria A, et al. Diagnosis and treatment protocols for sexually transmitted infections. Revista Infectio. Vol. 26; No. 3. pp. 228–239, year 2022.

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