

Tache Pharmacy

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Nifedipine/Diltiazem/Nitroglycerin Ointment

Anal Fissures:

An anal fissure is a small tear in the skin that lines the anus and typically extends into a circular ring of muscle called the internal anal sphincter. Once a fissure develops, the internal anal sphincter typically goes in to spasm, causing further separation of the tear and impairs healing and causes pain. Exposure to feces can slow healing as the stools can cause a tearing, ripping, burning sensation after each bowel movement and rectal pain can last several minutes to hours. Bleeding can be mild and limited to a small amount of blood on the toilet paper or the surface of the stool or may cause discoloration of the toilet bowl. If the fissure lasts longer than 6 weeks the bleeding may stop but the pain can persist. Some patients may also notice an itching or irritation of the skin around the anus. It is estimated that 1 out of 5 people will develop an anal fissure during their lifetime.

This medicated ointment helps by relaxing the smooth muscle around the anus and reducing the internal anal sphincter pressure which decreases pain. It also dilates the blood vessels and promotes better blood flow to the injured area and thus helps heal the fissure.

Management:

Fissures can be treated both medically and surgically. First line management is to start a bowel regimen that includes a stool softener, 25-35 grams of fiber daily, adequate hydration and sitz baths for comfort. To alleviate pain and to aid in healing, topical application of either nifedipine, diltiazem or nitroglycerin is recommended. Roughly 80-90% of patients heal with a topical treatment. If you do not respond to this topical treatment ask us about possible stronger mixtures, or a product called a rectal rocket, which allows for longer contact time of the medication. Surgical options include Botox injection, fissurectomy and Botox, or sphincterotomy.

How should I use this medication?

Apply a small pea-sized amount with your finger just outside the anal canal (preferably not directly to the fissure which could cause discomfort), 2 to 3 times a day, or follow the directions on the prescription label given to you by your physician. Wash your hands before and after application, or you may want to wear a glove or a finger cot. You should also apply this before and after a bowel movement. It may take several weeks for the fissure to heal, so continue to use the medication for the entire treatment period.

What if I miss a dose?

Apply the missed dose as soon as possible, but do not use if it is nearly time for your next dose. If you are unsure, please contact the pharmacist for advice.

What side effects may I notice from using nifedipine/diltiazem/nitroglycerin ointment?

Side effects are very uncommon with the use of this medication. Side effects that may occur will likely occur in the beginning of therapy when the skin is damaged and there is a greater chance of the medication being absorbed into the blood. These can include:

- Perianal itching or soreness
- Headache
- Light-headedness
- Flushing

Rare side effects that you should report to your prescriber or health care professional as soon as possible:

- Agitation, nervousness, confusion, fast or irregular heart rate, vision changes, swollen or tender gums, dizziness or weakness, fainting

A very serious allergic reaction to this drug is rare. However, seek immediate medical attention if you notice any symptoms of a serious allergic reaction, including: rash, itching/swelling (especially of the face/tongue/throat), severe dizziness, trouble breathing.

Precautions

- Wash hands after applying cream to avoid possible eye contact
- Check with your physician or pharmacist if you are pregnant
- Discontinue if it causes local irritation

Storage

- Store in at room temperature, away from extremes of heat or moisture