Bump on side of anus: Hemorrhoids or something else? [1]

(1) Hi Alice,

This is sort of an embarrassing question...Recently I found out that there is something unusual just outside of my anus. It has grown like a pea. When I touch it, it is sort of hard but smooth, and it hurts a bit. What should I do? Is this like some kind of cancer?

? Bumpy peas

(2) Dear Alice,

I have this problem and I am too embarrassed to ask a doctor about it. I am a nineteen-year-old male and have this growth in my anus. It popped up about one week ago. It is about the size of a pea. Could it be hemorrhoids? If not, what can it be? Should I be worried, and what should I do about it?

Thank you.
Pea-Boy

Answer

Dear Bumpy peas and Pea-Boy,

Sounds like you have a situation that you won't want to sit on. All kidding aside, there are a number of conditions that may fit your descriptions, which range from common and benign (hemorrhoids) to more uncommon and serious (cancer). However, before you let your imagination get away from you, consulting a health care provider who can see you in person is the only way to diagnose the issue and prescribe any necessary treatment.

To answer your question, Pea-Boy, yes, the bump you've found could indeed be a common hemorrhoid, which are swollen veins in the lower rectum and anus (this goes for you, too, Bumpy peas). They tend to be followed by pain, swelling, or itching near the area, fecal leakage, and bloody bowel movements. A number of behaviors and conditions are associated with these particular bum bumps, including straining to have a bowel movement, constipation or diarrhea, heavy lifting, prolonged sitting, anal intercourse, pregnancy, obesity, and liver disease. Discomfort and swelling may come and go, usually lasting between three to five days. Hemorrhoids can either form internally (inside the anal canal) or externally with the potential to thrombus (form a clot), causing pain and additional swelling. The good news is that when it comes to these types of bumps, there are a number of options for treatment [2].
Other than hemorrhoids, there are several conditions that can cause similar small bumps to sprout near the anus:

- **Perianal hematomas** are very similar to hemorrhoids and often misdiagnosed as such. They are actually a burst blood vessel near the anus, causing a pool of blood to form underneath the skin. These bumps are usually caused by straining or trauma to the area and can be very painful. If caught within the first 48 hours or before they begin to heal on their own, they can be treated by a health care provider. Although the lump may take three months to clear up, the pain usually subsides in seven to ten days.

- **Molluscum contagiosum** is another type of bump that can occur anywhere on the body including near the anus. Despite being harmless, they can swell up and last between 6 to 12 months. Mollusca can very easily spread to other parts of the body through contact. These small bumps have the tendency to heal on their own, but there are some additional treatment options available to remove them sooner.

- **Anal warts** is also another possibility. They are not usually painful, but can spread and multiply. They are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV) and can be treated by topical medication, surgery, freezing, and laser treatment (all of which are administered by a health care provider).

- **Anal cancer** is uncommon, but can also appear as a small lump in the anal canal. Other symptoms include anal bleeding, itching, or pain. The majority of anal cancers are caused by HPV. Risk factors include older age, smoking, engaging in anal sex, immunosuppressant drugs or conditions (including HIV). Anal cancer can be treated by chemotherapy, radiation, or several different surgical procedures.

Before you get all bummied out or try to treat symptoms, it’s best to get help identifying the real culprit for your pea-sized bumps. Though it may feel awkward, know that health care providers are trained professionals can properly diagnose and treat these types of conditions - which will hopefully also relieve your worry!

Alice!

Related questions

- Hemorrhoids and anal sex? Okay?[^9]
- Bathroom reading and hemorrhoids!?[^10]
- How to tell mollusca from genital warts[^12]
- Gas, bloating, fiber?[^13]

Resources

- Medical Services (Morningside) [^14]
- Medical Services (CUMC) [^15]

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