

Commissioning Statement:

Condition or Treatment:	Anal Fissure (Surgery)
Background:	An anal fissure is a tear in the lining of the lower rectum (anal canal) that causes pain during bowel movements.
Commissioning position:	<p>Policy: For referral to secondary care the patient should meet at least one of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple, off the midline, large or irregular (atypical fissures) as these may be the manifestation of underlying disease <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children whose anal fissure has not healed after 2 weeks <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe pain refractory to conservative therapy and impacting on patient wellbeing <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persisting anal fissure not healed after 8 weeks of conservative management <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms suggestive of systemic disease e.g. inflammatory bowel disease <p>Consider referring an elderly person earlier to exclude an anal or low rectal malignancy.</p> <p>A 2 week wait referral should be considered for patients aged 50 and over with unexplained rectal bleeding' or 'All ages (<50) with rectal bleeding and any of the following unexplained symptoms or findings: abdominal pain/change in bowel habit/weight loss/iron-deficiency anaemia'.</p>
Effective From:	1 July 2021
Summary of evidence/ rationale:	<p>Effectiveness of topical nitrates for healing</p> <p>Evidence on the effectiveness of topical nitrates for healing anal fissure:</p> <p>A Cochrane systematic review concluded that, from the available evidence, glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) may be applied to acute or chronic fissures in adults, and to acute fissures in children with a chance of a cure that is marginally better than placebo. However, late recurrence of anal fissure is common (in approximately 50% of those initially healed).</p> <p>A Cochrane systematic review (August 2010) aimed to assess the efficacy and morbidity of several medical treatments for anal fissure [Nelson et al, 2012].</p>

	<p>Meta-analysis of 18 randomized controlled trials (n = 1315) compared the healing rate of anal fissure in people treated with topical GTN with people treated with placebo. Four of the trials included only children (n = 165).</p> <p>GTN was significantly better than placebo in a combined analysis and also in all of the sensitivity analyses related to adults. No significant difference in healing rates was found in children after a study with an abnormally low placebo response was excluded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of treatment: <p>The healing rate in the treatment group in all of the 18 studies was 49% compared with 36% in the placebo group (P = 0.0009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harms of treatment: <p>The risk of headache when using GTN was 30%, using figures from all of the twenty-four studies that used GTN. (Six additional studies made other comparisons with GTN: botulinum toxin, calcium channel blockers, lidocaine, 'healer cream', home dilators and partial, lateral, and internal sphincterotomy.)</p> <p>Two case series of people who had apparently been cured by GTN reported recurrence rates of 51% and 67%</p> <p>Effectiveness of topical nitrates for relieving pain</p> <p>Evidence on the effectiveness of topical nitrates relieving pain from anal fissure:</p> <p>In a non-systematic review of evidence from three randomized controlled trials (RCTs), a clinically-significant reduction in pain from chronic anal fissure when treated with rectal glyceryl trinitrate ointment (4 mg/gram compared with placebo) was demonstrated.</p> <p>A non-systematic review investigated the therapeutic efficacy of 0.4% nitroglycerin ointment for relieving pain from a chronic anal fissure [Fenton et al, 2006].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authors discussed three moderate-sized RCTs which involved 'intention to treat' analyses. • The authors concluded that 0.4% nitroglycerin ointment significantly decreased pain scores in people with a chronic anal fissure.
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Additional Information/References:

Clinical Knowledge Summaries Anal Fissure November 2012

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/anal-fissure/#!scenario>