

Proctitis

Proctitis is inflammation of the lining of the rectum, called the rectal mucosa. Proctitis can be short term (acute) or long term (chronic). Proctitis has many causes. It may be a side effect of medical treatments like radiation therapy or antibiotics. Sexually transmitted diseases like gonorrhea, herpes, and chlamydia may also cause proctitis. Inflammation of the rectal mucosa may be related to ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, autoimmune conditions that cause inflammation in the colon or small intestine. Other causes include rectal injury, bacterial infection, allergies, and malfunction of the nerves in the rectum.

The most common symptom is a frequent or continuous sensation or urge to have a bowel movement. Other symptoms include constipation, a feeling of rectal fullness, left-sided abdominal pain, passage of mucus through the rectum, rectal bleeding, and anorectal pain.

Physicians diagnose proctitis by looking inside the rectum with a proctoscope or a sigmoidoscope. A biopsy (a tiny piece of tissue from the rectum) may be removed and tested for diseases or infections. A stool sample may also reveal infecting bacteria. If the physician suspects Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, colonoscopy or barium enema x rays may be used to examine areas of the intestine.

Treatment depends on the cause of proctitis. For example, the physician may prescribe antibiotics for proctitis caused by bacterial infection. If the inflammation is caused by Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, the physician may recommend the drug 5-aminosalicylic acid (5ASA) or corticosteroids applied directly to the area in enema or suppository form, or taken orally in pill form. Enema and suppository applications are usually more effective, but some patients may require a combination of oral and rectal applications.

Additional Information on Proctitis

The National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse collects resource information on digestive diseases for National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) Reference Collection. This database provides titles, abstracts, and availability information for health information and health education resources. The NIDDK Reference Collection is a service of the National Institutes of Health.

To provide you with the most up-to-date resources, information specialists at the clearinghouse created an automatic search of the NIDDK Reference Collection. To obtain this information, you may [view the results of the automatic search on Proctitis.](#)

If you wish to perform your own search of the database, you may access and search the [NIDDK Reference Collection database online](#).

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse

2 Information Way
Bethesda, MD 20892-3570
Phone: 1-800-891-5389
Fax: 703-738-4929
Email: nddic@info.niddk.nih.gov
Internet: www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov

The National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC) is a service of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). The NIDDK is part of the National Institutes of Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Established in 1980, the Clearinghouse provides information about digestive diseases to people with digestive disorders and to their families, health care professionals, and the public. The NDDIC answers inquiries, develops and distributes publications, and works closely with professional and patient organizations and Government agencies to coordinate resources about digestive diseases.

Publications produced by the Clearinghouse are carefully reviewed by both NIDDK scientists and outside experts.

This publication is not copyrighted. The Clearinghouse encourages users of this publication to duplicate and distribute as many copies as desired.

NIH Publication No. 05-4627
March 2005