



# Anal Skin Tags

Anal skin tags are excess skin growths located at the anal opening. This may occur after flare-ups of haemorrhoids during pregnancy, external haemorrhoid thrombosis (clots), straining from constipation or diarrhoea, heavy lifting, or strenuous exercise. Sometimes anal skin tags may reflect an underlying problem such as anal fissure or inflammatory bowel disease.

## Clinical presentation

Small asymptomatic tags are very common. Larger tags are more frequently associated with swelling, itching, heaviness, hygiene problems, and a skin rash.

Diagnosis is made by clinical examination, supplemented by rigid or flexible sigmoidoscopy and/or proctoscopy to exclude other ano-rectal conditions. If an anal skin tag becomes ulcerated, painful or starts bleeding, urgent specialist opinion should be sought.

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# Surgical treatment

Asymptomatic anal skin tags can be left alone.

In symptomatic cases, anal skin tags can be removed surgically, generally as a day-case, under general anaesthetic. The resultant wounds are left open and might need several weeks to heal fully.



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