

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid 31% of UA students who are single or dating have never had sex. (2003 Health & Wellness Survey, n=1792)

Q. My “bottom hole” has a wicked burning sensation. It burns from time to time, about three times a week. I am sexually active (2 partners). Could it be a sexually transmitted disease, or perhaps could it come from me shaving my “bottom hole”?

A. From your question, it sounds as if you’re referring to your anus. A burning sensation in and around the anus can be caused by a variety of factors:

- 1) **Anal fissures** – The lining of the anus is made up of very delicate tissues that can easily tear if strained. Anal fissures (small tears in the anus) can result from a large bowel movement or from receiving anal sex. They can also be caused by razor nicks when shaving the anus. These fissures often burn, and may bleed. They can be very painful and tend to heal slowly.
- 2) **Hemorrhoids** – Hemorrhoids are enlarged veins in the lower rectum or anus that can produce pain, burning and/or itching, and may bleed. They can result from straining during a bowel movement, constipation, a low-fiber diet, overuse of laxatives, pregnancy, and sitting for long periods of time. A health care provider can offer remedies to help soothe hemorrhoids.
- 3) **Sexually transmitted disease** – Unprotected anal sex is highly risky for STD transmission. In fact, it is the riskiest of all sexual behaviors for HIV transmission. This is due to how fragile the anal tissues are, and how easily they can tear, exposing the recipient to diseases his/her partner may have. One STD that could cause a painful burning around the anus is herpes. Although not 100% safe, using condoms during anal sex and withdrawing prior to ejaculation will help reduce risk of STDs.
- 4) **Dermatitis** – Over-aggressive hygiene practices can cause dermatitis, or skin irritation, in and around the anus. Burning, itching and pain may all be symptoms of dermatitis.

Although it may seem embarrassing, visit a health care provider to get an accurate diagnosis. Providers at Campus Health are highly professional and knowledgeable about the possibilities listed above. Getting an accurate diagnosis will ensure that you receive the most effective treatment for a quick recovery.

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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