

Skin is made up of layers of tissue which protect your body. Injury can peel these layers apart causing redness and pain or even cause blisters and bulky eruptions. Anyone with a healthy rectum and colon, who has frequent bowel motions, may get sore perianal skin from time to time. However, perianal skin soreness is very common when ileoanal pouch frequency is more than 10 times in 24 hours. This is caused by bowel motions being in contact with the ileal pouch-anal anastomosis or leakage of stool from the ileoanal pouch into the anal canal. This can be in association with an itch and/or rectal burning. When we eat, the food is mixed with digestive juices (acids and enzymes) to digest the food so that the nutrients can be absorbed. Normally the large intestine absorbs these nutrients and bulks stool, however, since you do not have a large intestine with your ileoanal pouch, these digestive enzymes remain in the stool and if this is in contact with your perianal skin can start to damage your skin. Also if you have a high pouch frequency this adds to the problem.

Taking good care of the skin around the anus can help manage these symptoms.

● **Hints and tips to help:**

- Fully clean and dry anal area after each pouch motion
- Use a good barrier cream, can insert a pea size amount up inside the anal canal
- Use shower head or bidet. Portable bidets are available from chemists
- Use moist toilet paper or wipes
- Wear loose cotton underwear
- Consider thickening the bowel output (this can be done with diet and/or medication, e.g. Loperamide, Codeine Phosphate)
- Some foods can increase itching or burning e.g. Citrus, chili and garlic
- Prepare a shallow bath (use Epsom salts) and sit for 10–15 minutes
- Use hair dryer to dry skin, use cool settings or a fan

Everyone has a different barrier cream preference for different reasons. Here are some examples of barrier creams pouch patients use:

ON PRESCRIPTION	PURCHASED FROM A CHEMIST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ilex skin protectant paste (ref: IP51) • LBF barrier cream 30 g (ref: 3823) • Hydromol cream or ointment • MediDerma Pro Skin Protectant Ointment 115 g (ref: 63605) • Coloplast Brava cream (ref: 12000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudocrem • Metanium (nappy rash ointment) • Bepanthen (nappy rash ointment) • Calmoseptine (can buy from the internet – made in USA)

● **Skin complications** – in addition to sore perianal skin, there are some other skin related complications that people with an ileoanal pouch may struggle with

- **Folliculitis** – if you have excessive amount of hair on perianal skin, it may be more difficult to maintain good anal skin care, therefore, some people choose to shave the area around their anus. However, shaving the perianal area may cause an infection in the hair follicles known as folliculitis. Folliculitis is characterised by a red rash with tiny white-headed pimples over the shaved area. It is advisable to use an electric trimmer rather than a razor or hair remover products, as these could irritate your skin. Shave your skin once a week or as needed, however, try not to shave too often. In case of folliculitis you should keep the area clean and dry. Avoid shaving the area for a few weeks. The use of a mild antibacterial soap may also be effective. Sometimes topical antibiotics or antifungal creams may be required to treat persistent problem.
- **Incontinence dermatitis** – persistent incontinence or seepage problems with your ileoanal pouch may cause severe excoriation to perianal area. In this case anal skin care is essential. In addition to the hints and tips mentioned previously, some people may find it helpful to wear a pad. Pads are available in different sizes to meet individual needs, furthermore, they also come in a triangular shape for men.

If anal skin problem persists, seek medical advice.