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## Men's Health

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## Proctalgia Fugax: Could This Be You?

Some studies say it's more common in men, while others say it's more prevalent among women. Another report claims it's an ailment that occurs in the teenage years, while yet another researcher declares it's usually found in middle-aged men and happens only while sleeping. Many researchers say it goes away later in life. Some say the pain lasts only a few seconds, although others recognize that the excruciating torment may go on for an hour or more. People who suffer from it have their own stories.

**The medical profession may call It...**  
**Anal Sphincter Spasm**  
**Levator Ani Syndrome**  
**Rectal Spasm**  
**Anorectal Pain**  
**Coccydynia**  
**Perirectal Pain**  
**Myofascial Pain Syndrome**  
**Fibromyalgia**  
**Constipation**  
**Gas**  
**Psychosomatic**  
**All in your head**

Proctalgia Fugax (PF) is not a popular dinner-time or cocktail party conversational topic. It might not even be something you want to talk to your doctor about. But if you suffer from it and don't know what it is, you may feel like you're having recurring nightmares every time you experience an episode. Just having a name for it, however, can

be a relief.

### What It Is

PF can be defined by one word: pain. If you've got it, you might feel like it's a knife stabbing you in the lower rectal or anal area. The pain can be on one side or the other, or it can even shift from side to side during a single episode. It may radiate inward and outward from the rectum in such a way that it's hard to tell exactly where it is. It might feel like the pain spreads to your tailbone or to the joint between your thigh and hip. It may shoot down your leg, and it might even feel like you've been kicked in the groin: hard.

While experiencing PF, you may also feel like you need to have a bowel movement, but nothing happens. Sometimes there's relief if you do have a movement, other times there isn't. For some people, the pain begins *after* a movement or during. For others, the pain begins in the middle of the night while sleeping and becomes so

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in the middle of the night while sleeping and becomes so intense that sleep is impossible. For many men (and women), PF can occur during sex, immediately after orgasm, or several hours later. Sometimes an erection can be caused by PF, though any guy will tell you this is not exactly a time you can do anything about it, especially if you're passing out.

### What Causes It

While no doctor or medical researcher claims to know of one single cause for PF, many theorists agree that the pain is caused by muscle spasm or contractions. In one study, measurement of anal sphincter muscle pressure showed that, while a PF sufferer is at rest with no pain, the muscle pressure was measurably less than during an episode of PF. In addition, muscle relaxant drugs created the same lessening of pressure.

But why the spasms? In many cases, PF can be associated with gastrointestinal disorders, such as [Irritable Bowel Syndrome](#). According to several small studies and anecdotal investigations, PF can also be associated with stress and anxiety. For many PF sufferers, attacks may be more frequent during times of difficulty. This does *not* mean that you are somehow imagining it. What it can mean is that, just as stress can create muscle-tension headaches, migraines, stomach upset, and a host of other stress-related diseases, it may also cause muscles of the rectal area to have spasms.

### Treatments to try if you've been diagnosed...

- [Apply pressure with fist or sit on tennis ball](#)
- [Suck ice chips](#)
- [Mentally try to relax the area](#)
- [Rock back and forth](#)
- [Lie on your side, try to relax, then change sides](#)
- [Sit on a vibrating cushion](#)
- [Lie down before you feel faint](#)
- [Treat irregularity or constipation](#)
- [Talk to your health-care provider about inhalers, nitroglycerine, medications, and acupuncture.](#)

### You may call it...

**Butt cramps**  
**Butt clench**  
**Butt attack**  
**PITA (pain in the \*\*\*)**  
**Misery**  
**Unbearable**  
**Unmentionable**  
**Punishment from God**

### [Read more...](#)

The PF sufferer who has visited dozens of doctors over many years may feel like it's just something he has to live with. When a doctor tells you "it's all in your head" and you know it's somewhere else, you might even begin to think you're going a bit batty. But if your doctor has ruled out all other possible conditions such as [anal fissures](#), [anal cancer](#), [hemorrhoids](#), and other related diseases, your pain might be caused by PF. If you've been checked for [colo-rectal cancer](#), and if you're

still getting severe pain in the lower rectal area and your doctor is just shaking his head, ask him or her to look up

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Proctalgia Fugax.

#### [Treatment Of Proctalgia Fugax With Salbutamol Inhalation](#)

This study showed that pain was lessened in a study group of 16 PF sufferers, and the relief was greatest for those with long-lasting pain.

#### [Levator Syndrome](#)

This article describes Levator Syndrome as well as PF, and some additional treatments are suggested. It also provides links to related disorders.

#### [Mechanically Induced Pelvic Pain And Organic Dysfunction](#)

This article and site recommends spinal manipulation (chiropractic) as a means of providing pain relief for PF and many other painful conditions that appear to have no organic cause.

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