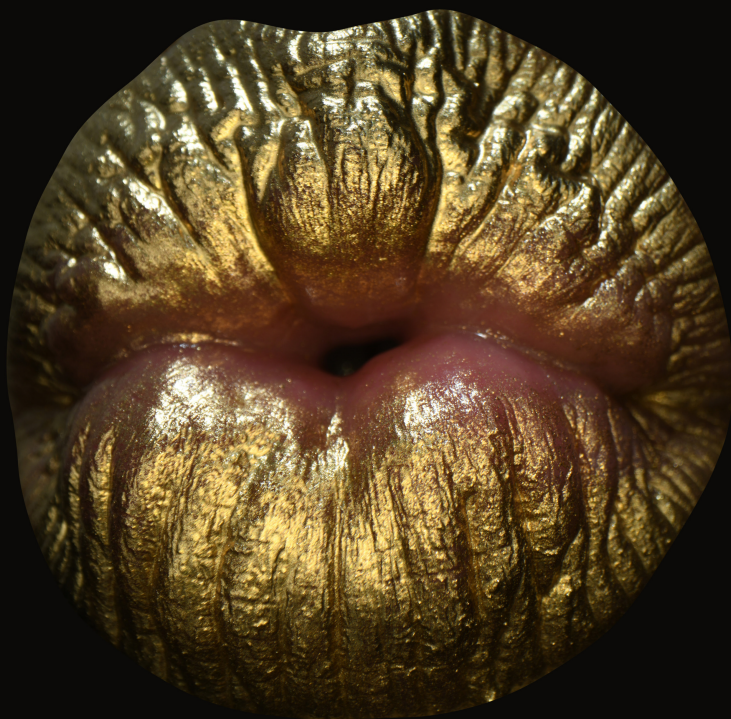


**ANAL HEALTH
WHEN YOU ARE A MAN
WHO HAS SEX WITH MEN
OR A TRANS* PERSON
INVOLVED
IN SEX WORK
AND/OR PROSTITUTION**



alias.brussels

Some basics



Digestive flora

Our digestive tract, which begins in the mouth and ends in the anus, is home to a large number of micro-organisms in the intestine. This collection of harmless bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi makes up our intestinal microbiota (or intestinal flora).

Transit

Intestinal transit refers to the progression of food from digestion in the stomach to expulsion in the faeces. Food is first chewed in the mouth, then travels through the oesophagus to the stomach, where it is digested. It then passes into the small intestine and finally the colon, where the faeces are stored before passing through the rectum for excretion. The whole process takes at least 8 hours to complete, and can take up to twice as long, depending on your metabolism and diet.

What does 'normal' stool look like?

Brown, well-formed stools that are easy to expel are considered healthy. The frequency with which you have a bowel movement varies according to your age and the person you are with: some go every day, others every two or three days. The key is to know what is 'normal' for you so that you can detect abnormal changes in your bowel movements.

Rectum

The rectum is the last part of the digestive tract. It follows the colon and extends to the anus. It is located in the pelvis, in front of the sacrum and coccyx, the two bones at the end of the spinal column.

Anus

In anatomy, the anus is the terminal orifice of the digestive tract.

Prostate

The prostate is a gland of the reproductive system. It is the shape and size of a chestnut in young people, but increases in size with age. It is located below the bladder and in front of the rectum. It surrounds the beginning of the urethra, the channel through which urine and sperm are passed.

Anal pleasure

Anal pleasure goes hand in hand with knowing your body well and being prepared for anal sex. Preparing the body for anal penetration will prevent pain and injury. .

The enema



Enemas based on rectal preparations found in chemists' shops are not necessary for normal anal sex. If an enema is necessary for specific practices, we recommend that you don't do it every day.

For your enema, you can use clean, warm water, in small quantities and taking your time. Feel the temperature of the water with your hand before injecting it. Limit the enema to the rectal ampulla, using an anal bulb or a special nozzle that you can find in sex shops. This will allow you to see what's going in and what's coming out and avoid any nasty surprises.

We recommend that you avoid using a hose that could damage your rectum, as well as water that's too hot or too cold.

Risks associated with enemas

A badly administered enema can damage the tissues of the rectum/colon, cause intestinal perforation and, if the device is not clean, lead to infection. Short-term side effects can include bloating and cramping. In the long term, enemas can upset the balance of the microbiota in your intestine, by eliminating the good bacteria (probiotics), and give you stomach upsets. After unprotected sex, enemas increase the risk of injury.

Myths associated with enemas

Enemas detoxify: not really. Food waste comes from recent meals and is eliminated during normal bowel movements in due course. There's nothing toxic about them.

Enemas are safe: enemas can be useful in medicine, but administering them at home is not without risk. Regular, long-term use of enemas can cause electrolyte imbalances and weaken the microbiota (which contains the bacteria necessary for good health). Temporary side effects of enemas can include bloating and cramps.

Coffee enemas are beneficial: there is no benefit to taking coffee rectally. In fact, the practice carries the same risk of complications as regular enemas, plus the risk of rectal burns if the coffee is too hot. If you want to enjoy coffee, better to drink it.

Alternatives to enemas

Know and listen to your body

Enemas are not necessary if you know your body and the effects of your diet on your bowel movements. To ensure that your stools are well-formed, eat a healthy diet and take certain food supplements such as psyllium blond or Pure for men (c). Similarly, reducing certain foods and favouring others can help. Reducing fast sugars, gluten or lactose, eating rice to slow down transit or fruits and vegetables to speed it up, are all ways to help. Reducing fast sugars, gluten or lactose, eating rice to slow down transit or fibre to speed it up, are all ways of improving transit. In the case of chronic constipation, take your time, drink plenty of water, eat a lot of veggies and fruits and don't push.

Laxatives and antidiarrheals

Taking laxatives to empty the colon, or antidiarrheals, is not recommended. They are medicines and, like all medicines, should only be taken on medical advice. There are natural alternatives, such as psyllium or activated charcoal, which are less harmful to anal flora and health.

Pharmacopoeia

Psyllium

Blond psyllium is a plant with laxative, appetite-suppressant and intestinal transit regulating properties. It is marketed in the form of a dietary supplement and has the dual advantage of giving consistency to liquid stools, or rehydrating a fecal bowl that is too dry. It is particularly recommended for people who want to improve their bowel movements, without necessarily having to have an enema. You can find psyllium in powder form in herbal shops and certain specialist shops (where it is more affordable than in sex shops).

If you are taking PrEP or ARV treatment, be careful not to eat psyllium 2 hours before taking it and up to 2 hours afterwards.

Activated charcoal

Activated charcoal is sometimes used to treat diarrhea, for its anti-diarrheal properties. It also helps with heartburn, aerophagia and flatulence. Like psyllium, it should be taken at a distance from your PrEP or ARV treatment.

Gastric dressings

Clay-based gastric dressings can be used as an adjunct treatment for acute and chronic diarrhea in adults.

Probiotics

Probiotics are bacteria or yeasts that modulate bacterial proliferation in the intestine. They are sold in tablet form with the aim of restoring the intestinal flora and can be used as an adjunct treatment in the event of acute diarrhea. More generally, by restoring the intestinal flora, probiotics help to regulate transit.

Anal health and practices associated with exchanging sex for money or services



You practice scatophilia

Make sure you've been vaccinated against hepatitis A and B! Avoid swallowing urine or feces, which are loaded with bacteria, viruses and parasites, and avoid contact with skin and eye lesions (wounds, sores).

You use a vibrator

If possible, use a condom every time you use it (anal or vaginal penetration). Change the condom between each partner and each penetration, and every 15-20 minutes, to avoid it tearing. Don't forget the lubricant.

If you don't use a condom, it's best to clean the vibrator between each use and partner. Keep an eye on your partner's genitals and anus, and be vigilant if you spot any pimples, pus, a strange smell, etc.

You have sex with several partners

If you have repeated sex with several partners over a long period, make sure you change condoms between each partner. If you wash between two clients, surface hygiene is sufficient, using a neutral soap so as not to damage your intimate flora. If you use an internal condom, make sure your partner is not wearing an external one. Use lubricant.

You're fisting

Try to use latex gloves and plenty of lubricant. For hand fist-fucking, short gloves are fine. For fist-fucking with the arm, opt for long gloves covering the whole arm.

Before and after, wash your hands and arms. Take off your rings, piercings and bracelets and cut your nails so that they don't damage either the gloves or the skin.

You practice bareback

To reduce the risks, you can avoid swallowing sperm, avoid letting your partner ejaculate inside you and, in the same way, avoid ejaculating inside your partner. If you suffer an anal injury, avoid contact with your partner's blood and think about PrEP, TaSP and PEP.

You take part in orgies

As with vibrators, change the condom with each partner, clean the sextoy between uses, and don't share your equipment if you take snifter or injection products.

For anilingus

If you have small wounds (shaving, herpes, bleeding gums), avoid any contact with blood, sperm or pre-ejaculatory fluid. After brushing your teeth, wait at least 30 minutes before rimming. Brushing your teeth could cause small wounds through which you could be contaminated.

It is advisable to use a latex square (also known as a dental dam) and to get vaccinated for hepatitis A and B.

You inject products into your anal plug

Don't hesitate to talk to your GP or to Alias about this, as these products can be dangerous.

**Little and big
aches and pains**



If it itches, if it hurts, if there's blood, mucus or rashes around the anus (pimples and even large warts), it's time to seek medical advice. You can go to Alias, or, if you're not involved in sex work, contact Ex-Aequo for its list of Très Très Bons Médecins (TTBM), where you can talk about your symptoms without fear of judgement.

The Alias medical hotline is open to men who have sex with men and trans people affected by sex work/prostitution. It takes place every Tuesday from 6pm to 9pm at the Alias offices at 33, rue du Marché au Charbon, 1000 Brussels.*

For internal or external hemorrhoids, anal fissures, abscesses or fistulas

Consult a proctologist and give your body time to heal before resuming anal sex.

In the case of herpes, warts or condylomata

They can be treated! Consult a proctologist and prefer other practices until the condition has healed. Some treatments are available at Alias and we can refer you to a proctologist you can trust. Even if there are no symptoms or visible lesions, routine proctology check-ups to look for HPV or cancerous lesions are recommended.

In the case of syphilis, or symptomatic gonorrhea or chlamydia

Regular screening is recommended for syphilis and for symptomatic gonorrhea and chlamydia ; and treatment should be started if the results are positive. You can notify your partners anonymously and free of charge via the <https://depistage.be/sms/> website.

In the event of a cyst

Do you feel a hard little lump in your anal area? It could be a cyst, and we recommend that you take it to a doctor for further evaluation.

What about cancer?

Some STIs encourage the development of certain cancers. This is the case with HPV for cancers of the anus and penis. Vaccination schemes can be an effective means of prevention, particularly the HPV vaccine. Don't hesitate to discuss this with the doctor you see as part of your PrEP follow-up, your HIV follow-up or your GP. From the age of 50 onwards, an annual preventive check-up and colorectal cancer screening are recommended.

A word about Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

PrEP is a new combination of drugs (Emtricitabine/Tenofovir) taken orally, which complements the various ways of preventing HIV transmission. It is a preventive treatment offered to people who have not contracted the virus, but who are at high risk of infection. Taken correctly, PrEP protects you (and only you) from HIV (and only from HIV).

A word about TaSP

TasP (Treatment as Prevention) refers to prevention through correct use of anti-HIV treatment for people who are known to be HIV-positive and have been undetectable for more than 6 months. With treatment, they can no longer transmit the virus, as the undetectable virus is untransmissible (U=U).

A word about post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)

Post-exposure treatment (PEP is initiated within 72 hours of exposure to HIV. The sooner you take PEP, the more effective it is (at the latest before 72 hours). It consists of taking HIV treatment for 30 days. PrEP, TaSP and PEP are effective ways of protecting yourself from the virus.

Anal health and risk reduction, general principles



HPV vaccination & Hepatitis

HPV vaccination is recommended, particularly if you are HIV-positive, have multiple partners and are under 35. Check with your doctor how many doses you need, and if you have a health insurance policy, you're entitled to €50 a year for vaccinations! You can always talk to Alias about vaccinations.

If you're not sure whether you've been vaccinated against hepatitis A and B, you can talk to your doctor, who can check your vaccination status.

There is no vaccine for hepatitis C yet, but it is easily detectable and now well treatable.

Enemas

It's best to limit the use of enemas and to know your body well. For better transit, you can adapt your diet, for example by reducing lactose if your stools are loose, or by taking probiotics or psyllium-based food supplements. If certain practices require an enema, use lukewarm, slightly salty water in small quantities. Space out enemas as much as possible to avoid damaging your flora.

Drugs and sensations

Some drugs limit sensation, such as ketamine, which limits pain. Others are disinhibiting and encourage extreme activities, in which you could be injured. You need to be aware of this, get to know your drugs, control the doses and consult a proctologist if you are injured.

Internal condoms

The internal condom is suitable for anal penetration! All you have to do is remove the ring at the bottom of the condom and insert it.

Be careful not to use an internal condom and an external condom at the same time, as they could tear. It's either one or the other, and always with lubricant.

Regular screening & prophylaxis

Think about PrEP or take your TASP, PEP (possible and necessary if you miss your prep). We advise you to come every three months if you have multiple partners. If you are taking PrEP under medical supervision, you will need to be tested again every three months, to renew your prescription. This will be an opportunity for the doctor to answer any questions you may have about your anal health.

Something to remember

Anal sex can be painful if you don't feel like it. Take your time, to minimize the risk of fissures, hemorrhoids and injuries during penetration. Use lubricant, go slowly (this also applies to enemas), don't skip foreplay (really!), and go at the pace of your body and your desires.

Seek professional advice

Regular screening is the first step towards good anal health. If you're taking risks or have any questions or symptoms, consult a doctor specializing in sexual health, who will be able to refer you to trusted proctologists. We rarely think about it, but consulting a proctologist is never superfluous, even if there are no symptoms (and it's a good idea to think about it in advance, as appointments can often take a long time to get).

Autopalpation works down there too

For anal self-checking, the signs that should prompt you to seek advice are:

- Pain
- Induration, like a hard ball
- Granulation, similar to a feeling of sand

resources

Find a **screening centre near you** at www.depistage.be

Find a **safe doctor** at exaequo.be/fr/ttbn

On **Instagram**, you can follow:

@doctorcarlton

@bottomsdigest

@oyes_asbl

For men who have sex with men and trans* people involved in sex work, Alias runs a **free walk-in STD testing**. For more information, visit **www.alias.brussels**

Since 2009, Alias has been offering
psycho-medico-social support to men
who have sex with men and trans* people
involved in prostitution in Brussels.

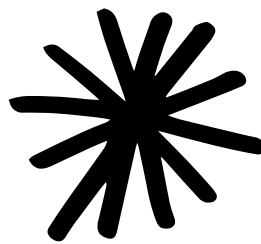
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr Maria BORTES-STER

Dr Julien CAMBIER

Dr Fabian COLLE

Dr Luca PAU



Published by Alias asbl, 2024. All rights reserved.
www.alias.brussels - contact@alias.brussels
Facebook: [alias.bxl](https://www.facebook.com/alias.bxl) - Instagram [@alias.bxl](https://www.instagram.com/alias.bxl)