

Bowel Control Problems? There's Help.

If you have a bowel control problem, you are not alone. Over 15 million people in the U.S. are affected by bowel disorders, and 80% are women. Ask your doctor about new diagnostic procedures and treatments that can help you enjoy a better quality of life.



Discuss these bowel control problems with your doctor

- Inability to control passing of gas, liquid or stool from bowels
- Severe urgency to have bowel movements, and the potential for accidents
- Staining or “streaking” of underwear
- Reduced activities due to fear of accidents
- Use of pads or diapers to manage bowel problems
- Experiencing frustration, depression, or anxiety due to bowel issues
- Frequent diarrhea, constipation, or excessive gas and bloating
- Sense of bulging in pelvic area

Common causes of bowel control problems or fecal incontinence

- **Muscle damage.** Injury to the rings of muscle in the anal canal (called anal sphincters). Often due to damage caused during childbirth.
- **Nerve damage.** Injury to the nerves that sense stool or control anal muscles, caused by giving birth, chronic straining during bowel movements, spinal cord injury, stroke or certain diseases.
- **Chronic constipation.** Weakening of anal muscles and/or nerves.
- **Diarrhea.** Uncontrollable, watery discharge.
- **Scarred tissue,** created from surgery, radiation or disease.
- **Other conditions,** such as rectal prolapse.

***Finding a Solution to Your Bowel Control Problem
Can Start with a Simple Diagnostic Procedure...***

...Your doctor may recommend a non-invasive ultrasound exam to diagnose your condition.

Diagnostic ultrasound for bowel control problems is called “endoanal ultrasound.”

Endoanal ultrasound uses sound waves to take pictures and video within the anal canal. As with fetal ultrasound during pregnancy, this ultrasound **does not** use radiation, and is a low risk procedure.

Endoanal ultrasound is considered the “gold standard” method for evaluating the condition of anal muscles (internal and external anal sphincters) and surrounding tissues. It provides a visual image of any muscle damage or scarring, and permits measurements within the anal canal.

Your doctor will use the results of your endoanal ultrasound examination to help determine the best treatment options. It is possible your doctor may recommend further testing.

The good news is that there are several new, effective treatments for bowel control problems. Getting a proper evaluation is the first step to wellness.

The sooner you are evaluated, the sooner you can find relief from your symptoms.

The endoanal ultrasound exam - What to expect

The exam will be performed in your doctor’s office, with specialized equipment. The procedure itself is painless and takes less than 15 minutes.

There is little preparation required for the exam. No sedation or topical anesthetic is required. You do not need to take any laxatives before the test.

You will be asked to undress from the waist down and either lie on your side on an examination table, or sit in a procedural chair.

During the exam, an ultrasound probe will be inserted about four inches into your anal canal. The probe is about the width of a finger, and will be covered with lubricating gel.

After the ultrasound images are collected, you will be able to get dressed and leave the office. You can continue with all normal activities that day.

You will be asked to schedule a follow up visit with the doctor to review the exam results and consider treatment options.

