Rectal Foreign Object Treatment

Self-Care at Home

As a general rule, most people who have a foreign object in their rectum that cannot be seen or felt outside the anus need to seek medical attention. Many people, probably through embarrassment or fear of ridicule, will attempt to remove the item themselves. This is often very difficult and can only be accomplished by a doctor. Most laxatives are too slow in onset to be effective. If a rectal foreign body is present, the sooner it is removed the better.

Medical Treatment

In some cases, the foreign object is close enough to the anus that it can be removed in the emergency department. Doctors know of many tricks to help them with this. One of the big problems with trying to remove rectal foreign bodies is that there is a strong degree of suction between the object and the walls of the rectum.

- Sometimes a tube is passed between the object and the wall of the rectum to try to equalize the pressure as the object is removed. This is uncomfortable, and you will be sedated for this procedure.
  - If the object is far into the rectum, it may be necessary for you to go to the operating room in order to have a general anesthetic to enable the object to be removed.
  - If you have evidence of infection in the abdomen, or a hole in the bowel, or heavy bleeding from the anus, you may need emergency surgery. In this case, you would be admitted to the hospital.
- In all cases, after the foreign body has been removed, the doctor will want to perform an examination called a sigmoidoscopy. The doctor uses a long, narrow tube (about 16-18 inches long and a little less than an inch wide) to look inside the anus and rectum. This is done in order to be sure that there has not been any damage to the lining of the bowel, either from the initial insertion of the foreign body, or from attempts—both by the person at home and at the hospital—to remove the item.
In the case of children, an examination should nearly always be performed under anesthesia. This is also true for uncooperative psychiatric patients.

People who are victims of sexual assault should have very careful examinations performed, to be absolutely sure that there has been no injury to the wall of the bowel. Depending upon the person, this may be best done under general anesthesia.

For more information, read the complete article, Foreign Body, Rectum on http://www.emedicinehealth.com.

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